

**WOMEN, MEN AND POWER:
GENDER RELATIONS IN MONTSERRAT**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Maudine Irish, who died so tragically in 1988. To me, Maudine symbolised Montserratian women; she was open and friendly, she laughed a lot and made others laugh, she worked hard, she wanted to share so much with other people and she always encouraged people to achieve. Her death is a great loss to her family, her village and Montserrat.

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Abstract

Women, Men and Power: Gender Relations in Montserrat

This thesis draws on and informs feminist theory and Caribbean studies and is concerned with investigating the particular form of gender relations in Montserrat.

Gender relations are conceptualised as power relations between men and women. This argument is derived from an exploration of the possibilities and limitations of a range of feminist literature: marxist feminism, socialist feminism, women's studies, feminist geography, radical feminism and the studies of women and development.

The gender relations in Montserrat are explored in four areas of social organisation: the household, the workplace, union patterns and heterosexual behaviour. They are seen as universal features of women's lives and, potentially, the main sites of gender relations. Montserratian gender relations were found to be patriarchal, but varied in strength within the four social areas. The household per se was not a site of patriarchal gender relations unless shared with a male partner. The workplace did not exhibit patriarchal gender relations. Gender relations in marriage and cohabiting unions were strongly patriarchal; those in visiting unions were either egalitarian or weakly patriarchal. Heterosexual behaviour, involving sexuality and biological reproduction, was identified as the main site of the maintenance and reproduction of patriarchal gender relations in Montserrat.

Montserratian gender relations are shown to be broadly similar to those of the Caribbean generally; but there are exceptions. Very low levels of marriage and cohabitation mean that household gender relations are less patriarchal than in other islands. In comparison with other Caribbean islands, where MNCs, low wages, strict gender segregation and a lack of employment legislation prevail; Montserratian women experience higher wages, job security and greater employment opportunities. The Montserratian workplace, therefore, cannot be seen as a site of patriarchal gender relations. However, as is commonplace throughout the Caribbean, union patterns, specifically marriage and cohabitation, and heterosexual behaviour are sites of patriarchal gender relations.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is an investigation into the nature of gender relations in the Caribbean. It will analyse the nature of gender relations within the household, the workplace, union patterns and heterosexual behaviour in Montserrat. This chapter will explain first why the Caribbean is the chosen region in which to base the study. It will also explain why Montserrat is the island chosen for the focus of the research. The questions related to the investigation of the nature of gender relations form the final part of this chapter.

1.2 Why The Caribbean?

There are several reasons for basing this thesis within the context of the Caribbean.

Within the feminist and development literature the Caribbean is a neglected area of research. There is a large literature on the gender roles, and some on gender relations, within Asia (Jeffery:1979, Kabeer:1985, Omvedt:1980, Sharma:1980, Souza:1980, Young:1973); in Africa (Bryceson:1985, Hafekin and Bay:1976, Nelson:1981, Njoku:1980); and in Latin America (Bronstein:1982, Harris:1982, Nash and Safa:1980, Pescatello:1973, Signs:1979). However, the Caribbean has not been the focus of similar research which concentrates on the multiple roles of women and the effect of development and social change on these roles. The little research that has attempted to do this has been carried out by academics from the region, most notably the women involved in the Women and Caribbean Project (Social and Economic Studies:1986). The Caribbean is therefore a region that has been neglected by feminist studies. It is

also a region which has undergone recent socio-economic changes which will probably have had an effect on the nature of gender relations (Massiah, 1986:1). For example, a rapid increase in women's paid employment.

1.3 Why Montserrat?

Montserrat is a small island within the Caribbean and has been the subject of very few academic studies. The two studies that have been conducted there have concentrated on migration (Philpott:1973) and the status of women (Moses:1976, 1977). This latter study, carried out in 1975, provided useful comparative material for looking at the changing nature of gender relations between the late 1970s and the 1980s. Apart from these studies, Montserrat is a relatively unresearched island, and therefore a good choice for an original piece of research. However, it was also a good choice for social and economic reasons. First the social reasons: the Caricom Census for 1980-1981 reveals that there have been considerable changes in two of the social areas that play an important part in the subordination of women, the household and the workplace. Montserrat has the smallest mean household size in the Caribbean region of 3.5 persons. By 1980 that figure had declined further to 3.1 (Caricom Census, Montserrat, Volume 3, 48). Whether this change in size was due to a change in the nature of household composition or demography was something that needed investigating; also, small mean household size is often indicative of both female headed households and single person households. This seemed to suggest, at the very least, a potentially interesting form of gender relations on Montserrat. There were good economic reasons too: the Caricom census showed that Montserrat had

experienced a rapid increase in the number of women moving into paid employment, mostly into the manufacturing sector (Ibid, 23). The increased economic participation of women not only introduces them to new sets of gender relations within the workplace, but may also affect the nature of existing gender relations.

Finally, as in much work, practical points proved influential. Montserrat is an English-speaking island (but it must be said that there is a pronounced dialect which can make it difficult to understand Montserradians as they speak to each other). Montserrat is still a British colony and this made it an island within which research could be carried out in a relatively straightforward manner, there would not be difficulties with visas and entry permits. Another important aspect for me was my own personal welfare. Montserrat does not have the record of violence associated with islands like Jamaica, nor has it had political difficulties like Grenada or St.Kitts and Nevis (Payne: 1981). It is a relatively safe place for a lone woman to carry out research.

Montserrat was the island selected for the fieldwork because it was not a much studied island like Jamaica, Barbados or Trinidad. It had experienced some major socio-economic changes which may have had an effect on the nature of gender relations. It was also a relatively easy place to carry out the research.

1.4 Questions and Gender Relations

This thesis investigates the nature of gender relations at two levels. The first level concentrates on gender relations in Montserrat; the second level is an evaluation of the concept of gender relations.

The first level of the thesis presents a description and analysis

of the nature of gender relations in Montserrat. It aims to investigate what form Montserratian gender relations take, how they are reproduced and the ways in which they are maintained.

At the second level, the thesis aims to make a contribution to feminist theory because, in presenting a description and analysis of gender relations in one particular place and at one particular time, it is also evaluating the usefulness of the general concept of gender relations.

The first two chapters develop the context for the investigation of gender relations in the Caribbean. Chapter II charts the intellectual processes that had to be gone through in order to conclude that gender relations, in particular patriarchal gender relations, was the most useful concept to work with. It also discusses four areas of social organisation which are fundamental to the nature of women's subordination. Chapter III presents the contextual information about these same four areas of social organisation within the Caribbean. These are the areas through which the nature of gender relations are to be studied. In Chapter IV, Montserrat, Elseka, the study village, and the methods of research, are discussed. The four empirical chapters each focus on Montserrat and a particular area of social organisation. Through these chapters the thesis demonstrates the nature of gender relations in Montserrat. The conclusion presents a summary of Montserratian gender relations and in doing so provides confirmation of the value of the concept of gender relations.

CHAPTER II

FROM CAMPS TO CONCEPTS: FEMINIST THEORY AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will establish the theoretical framework for the thesis. It will also chart the intellectual path that I followed in order to arrive finally at a clear concept of gender relations. A thesis is often presented in a neatly packed form, which shows a clear progression from A to B. This belies the confusion that surrounds much of its development. In this chapter I wish to show the intellectual trajectory that led to the development of a clear and workable conceptualisation of gender relations from an often confused body of literature, that of feminist theory.

2.2 Starting Points

I knew that I wanted to study the nature of gender relations in the Caribbean, and more specifically in Montserrat. I therefore had to place my study in the context of a broader theoretical literature on gender relations. However, there were an array of possibilities open to me. As the thesis would be carried out in the context of the Caribbean, Caribbean feminist work was an obvious choice. As the initial project had developed out of ideas based around feminist geography, that literature was another obvious choice. As the thesis aimed to investigate the nature of gender relations, the existing British feminist work on this might have proved useful. All the options were explored. First I investigated the state of feminist work in the Caribbean.

2.2.1 Feminist work in the Caribbean

There is relatively little theoretical feminist work in the

Caribbean as yet. In the early 1980s the Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) was carried out by the University of West Indies (UWI) through the Social and Economic Studies department in Barbados. It aimed to capture what Caribbean women thought about their lives and also;

"to devise a theoretical framework which would integrate the analysis of women's roles as they are affected by processes of social change" (Massiah, 1986:1)

The project was conceived, among other things, out of a realisation that there was not an adequate theoretical framework for the study of women's subordination in the Caribbean;

"Social science research in the region has proceeded on the basis of movement from one theoretical model to another, all offering explanations/interpretations at the macro-level, but none of them being particularly suited to explaining gender relations within the region." (Massiah, 1986:3)

Given this, it was clear that while the information provided by the WICP would be very useful in developing a contextual background to the Caribbean region, in particular to the roles women play in the region, it was not going to be useful for a theoretical conceptualisation of gender relations. I therefore turned to the next body of literature, feminist geography.

2.2.2 Feminist geography

In 1982 the Women and Geography group was established as part of the IBG. Geography has lagged behind other disciplines, particularly anthropology and sociology, in its contribution to feminist theory. As with the development of feminism in other disciplines, feminist geography developed from a severe degree of gender blindness in mainstream and radical geography. For geography, the initial questions concerned women and space, with the WGSF proposing a feminist geography which "explicitly takes into account the socially created gender

structure of society" (WGSF, 1984:21).

There were two groups developing within the WGSF, one group looking at women and the spatial environment within Britain (Bowlby et al:1983, Lewis:1982, McDowell:1983). The other group considered women and the spatial environment in the developing world (Momsen and Townsend: 1986, Moser and Peake:1987, WGSF, 1984:106-119). It was this latter group which promised to be the most useful for my own study of gender relations in the Caribbean. However, while the women and development group of the WGSF began to fill in some of the gaps concerning the position of women in the developing world, its work failed to provide a theoretical framework; the work tended to be descriptive, with little analysis, eg. Henshall Momsen and Townsend:1984. Furthermore, it concentrated on gender roles and did not discuss the concept of gender relations. As this was the main focus of my own study, I had to admit the existing work on feminist geography and the developing world, offered my own thesis little guidance.

2.2.3 Conclusion

During my early intellectual wanderings I had been forced to see the conceptual limitations of the current work on women in the Caribbean because of the absence of theoretical developments. I also had to reject the feminist geography work because it only presented more studies of 'women and...', albeit situated in different countries. My thesis was not to be a 'women and...' study but rather an investigation of a particular concept, that of gender relations, in a specific time and place. With these most obvious choices of literature put aside I had to turn to an altogether more complex and confusing body of literature, British feminist theory.

2.3 The Five British Feminist Camps

2.3.1 Introduction

Since the 1970s there has been a considerable amount of feminist academic literature published. Academic feminism has tried to establish a theoretical analysis of issues which have been debated throughout the feminist movement; such as childcare, sexuality, sex discrimination, gender stereotyping, gender roles; in general, aspects of women's lives that are directly linked with their subordination. Feminist academics have developed bodies of literature within their own countries. They are generally informed by, and inform, the women's liberation movements within their own country and so are often culturally specific¹. However at the general level there is considerable overlap between countries which are culturally and economically similar. Hence the debates that arise in British academic feminism are quite similar to those in the USA and Canada. This thesis considers the British feminist academic literature but reference will also be made to literature from the USA. The literature from the USA that is included is that which has become part of the feminist academic debate in Britain (Chodorow: 1974, Eisenstein: 1979, Reiter: 1975, Rosaldo and Lamphere: 1974)

I decided that there are five camps within feminism, although, inevitably, any rigid classification runs the risk of oversimplification. The term 'camps' is taken to mean collections of theorists and researchers divided according to how they study the general topic of women's subordination. The five camps are marxist feminism, socialist feminism, women's studies, radical feminism and women and development. The latter is rather an unusual inclusion and this is explained below.

The Caribbean is an underdeveloped region. There is a growing body of literature which describes and analyses the nature of women's lives in such regions. It is known collectively as the 'women and development' literature. As the fieldwork for this thesis were carried out in the Caribbean, the theoretical concepts and debates of a branch of feminist theory that considered non-British social organisation was seen to be potentially useful, ie. the debates that have emerged within this theoretical section, at the general level, were considered to be potentially relevant to the study of gender relations in the Caribbean.

So let us now consider the feminist camps that I thought might have offered a development of the theoretical concept which I was working with in my thesis.

2.3.2 Marxist feminism

Marxist feminism has developed out of marxist thought and has tried to write women in to a theoretical framework that is gender-blind. Marxism is concerned with the relations of appropriation and exploitation under capitalism; feminism considers the relations of gender (Barrett,1980:8). Marxist feminism, therefore, has attempted to broaden the conceptual categories of marxism in order to evaluate and analyse the position of women under capitalism (Himmelweit:1983). In particular, an attempt has been made to extend the concept of production to include reproduction; to broaden the concept of work to include all work, including that done by women, which is not creative of surplus value, eg. domestic labour. Given this emphasis it is not surprising that much of marxist feminist reasearch has focused on capitalist development and women's incorporation within the paid labour force, and the relationship between production and reproduction. These themes are exemplified in the

classic reserve army of labour and the domestic labour debates (Beechey: 1978, Bruegel:1979, Gardiner:1976).

There are problems, at the general level, with the approach adopted by marxist feminism. Marxist concepts, by and large, are precise in meaning and any alteration or broadening of these inevitably changes their meaning - for the worse. On the one hand, adding women into concepts that were not devised to analyse their oppression means that the true nature of women's subordination remains unexposed²: on the other, broadening marxist concepts runs the risk of reducing the incisiveness of these concepts.

After an exploration of this literature I remained unconvinced that the nature of gender relations could be explained entirely in terms of the contradictions between capital and labour: to me, what was remarkable, was the degree of similarity in the nature of women's oppression in all classes. The marxist feminist literature was therefore abandoned.

2.3.3 Socialist feminism

Socialist feminism developed out of the political movements of the left in the 1960s and early 1970s (Himmelweit:1976). This branch of feminism is less concerned with the origins of women's subordination but rather the nature of that subordination as it currently exists. Socialist feminists reject the notion put forward by the radical feminists, that men are 'the main enemy'. They see the struggle between the different classes of society and the roles women play in those classes as primary. They argue that women's oppression is part of class oppression and that women should unite with men to overthrow the class system. Without a class society, they argue, women's subordination will no longer exist.

They have considered the position of women within two distinct spheres, the domestic sphere and the workplace.

The main themes with which socialist feminism is associated are as follows; the inclusion of gender within social stratification (Mann and Compton:1986); gender roles in the workplace and the domestic sphere (Whitelegg:1982); gender divisions of labour (Barron and Norris:1976, Walby:1986); and the relationship between class and gender (Oakley: 1972).

The problem with the approach adopted by socialist feminism is that it prioritises class over gender and so cannot develop an adequate theory of women's subordination. Socialist feminists do not deny that the oppression of women is part of a system, but they think this system is based on capitalism (Delphy, 1984:140). Inevitably, this version of things leads to a focus on where women are within this system, rather than on how and why they come to be there - a situation which socialist feminism takes as self evidently the product of the system and not of the power relations women are involved in with men. In the few instances that socialist feminism acknowledges gender relations they are always linked to class relations and class antagonisms; gender relations are a facet of class relations. Like marxist feminism, socialist feminism does not provide an adequate theory of gender relations. It concentrates more on class relations. My thesis is about gender relations rather than the nature of class in the Caribbean. I therefore left the socialist feminist camp behind.

2.3.4 Women's studies

Women's studies does not develop any theoretical conceptualisation of the subordination of women but rather studies and describes the form

that subordination takes; what women do, where and how they do it. Its aim is not to explain but to record examples of women's oppression. It provides an important base of information which can then be used by feminist theorists to develop analysis. Women's studies show that women are involved at every level of society, but that their contribution is frequently ignored or undervalued. It aims to describe the lives and work of women that had previously been hidden (Rowbotham:1977). Women's studies show that the division of labour is not 'natural', but socially constructed through gender roles. The description of gender roles and gender stereotypes is the main focus of women's studies.

Women's studies has concentrated on the following themes: gender roles in institutions, for example in the home (Oakley:1985), women at work (West:1982), women and access to facilities, for example, health, (WGSF:1994), women and education (Deem:1978), gender discrimination and inequality (Oakley: 1982)³.

The main criticism of women's studies is that it fails to construct any kind of explanation about why women's subordination exists. Where it does draw conclusions, it is often tautological: women cannot get well-paid jobs because of their domestic duties; women are confined to the domestic sphere because they cannot get well-paid jobs. However, women's studies has developed a broad, and ever growing, knowledge of what women do. This is not only important as a data base for further analysis but also important in allowing women to see the important contributions they make to their societies, and also that they have different life experiences and face different difficulties to men. While women's studies in Britain undoubtedly have an important role I had to abandon their camp because they do not discuss the nature of gender relations, and they say nothing about the roles of women in other countries.

2.3.5 Radical feminism

Early radical feminism emphasised the biological differences between men and women and considered these differences to be the cause of women's subordination (Firestone:1971). Such biological reductionism has since been rejected in favour of an argument which states that the biological differences form the basis for the creation of different and unequal social roles and positions. As such differences are based on the differences between men and women they are called gender roles. Later radical feminists (Coveny et al:1984, Daly:1979, Millet: 1971) concentrate on the nature of the power relations between men and women, the gender relations. Men dominate gender relations and through their control of sexuality and biological reproduction they control women's lives. Such male control of women's lives is known as patriarchy, although it must be stated that the conceptualisation of patriarchy is the subject of considerable debate⁴. Gender relations and the means by which patriarchy is maintained is the main focus of their attention.

Radical feminism is associated with the following themes which are all aspects of the sphere of reproduction; sexuality (Caplan:1987, Coveney et al:1984, Rich:1981); biological reproduction (Gordon:1977, 1979); marriage and sexual unions (Barker:1978, Delphy:1984,); family relations (Dreitzel:1972); sexual violence against women (Dobash and Dobash:1980, Hammer:1978); male control of ideology and culture (Smart and Smart:1978).

A criticism levelled at radical feminism has been that with an excessive concentration on patriarchy and the reproductive sphere, the productive sphere and the subordination of women within it has been neglected. It has also been criticised for the separatist approach which some radical feminists adopt. Separatism from men is seen as impractical,

but, in any case, it is only proposed by a few. By presenting male dominated gender relations as the problem they place women's subordination at the level of individual experience, and this is disturbing for some⁵. Radical feminism appeared to be a camp within which I could place my thesis as it clearly conceptualised gender relations and made them a central concern. Their discussion of patriarchy also seemed useful because it clearly considered male dominance to be primary rather than capitalism or class struggle.

The usefulness of radical feminism for my thesis was further enhanced in 1986 when Jo Foord and Nicky Gregson published their article on a reconceptualisation of patriarchy as part of the debate within feminist geography. They argued that the concept of patriarchy has been marginalised in feminist geography work, largely because feminist geographers have been most influenced by socialist feminism (1986:187). They argue that feminist geography's concentration on women's inequality and gender roles has made it difficult to move from a description of women's subordination to an analysis of how such subordination is reproduced and maintained. The inequalities and roles develop from the unequal power relations between men and women, the gender relations (1986:187). It is the form gender relations take in any particular space or time that should be the main focus for feminist geography research. Women's subordination is apparently universal and so gender relations will usually occur in a patriarchal form. The strength, maintenance and reproduction of patriarchal gender relations should therefore be the main object of analysis for feminist geography. Radical feminism, and this new development within feminist geography, was therefore one of the camps in which I could pitch my thesis. However, the discussion within this camp was firmly entrenched in the British experience, I therefore had to

search for another feminist camp that may be useful for an analysis of gender relations in the Caribbean.

2.3.6 Women and development

This branch of feminism has developed out of and alongside the categories of feminism described above. The common theme that links women and development and separates it from the other categories is that their focus of attention is outside the British context. Their over-riding concern lies with the women in the developing world and the effects the development process is having on women. How they go about studying this varies markedly.

Some of the literature merely describes the roles and position of women in developing regions (Chant:1984, Overholt et al: 1985, Radcliffe:1986, Spiro:1984). This type of research describes patterns of women's lives and highlights the inequalities but fails to examine why such inequalities develop. Everything is blamed on development and there is no investigation into the nature of the relationships between men and women. Such work is rarely put to practical use; researchers are very rarely involved with development agencies, although they use the information provided by such agencies. Academically such research is at a dead end because all it can do is continue to describe the roles of women in the developing world and chart any changes. With its concentration on roles it is not useful to my thesis, although any work on the Caribbean is useful for background information.

Other studies aim to investigate the effect development has on women's lives (Afshar:1985, Black and Cotrill:1981; Boserup:1970, Dauber and Cain:1981; Rogers:1980, Tinker, Bransen and Buvinic:1976). This group does not concentrate on gender relations but it does offer critical

analysis, mostly of the way development policies are put into action and the sexism of the development agencies. Once again it is useful for background information but cannot help me with the theorisation of gender relations.

A smaller but growing section of this body of literature is that which analyses the position of women as a theoretical object of analysis (Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh:1981, IDS Subordination of Women Workshop:1979). Its debates include those of defining 'work' (Beneria:1980, Redclift:1988); the international division of labour (Elson and Pearson: 1981, Nash and Fernandez-Kelly:1983, Mies:1986, Pearson:1988); defining and analysing social reproduction (IDS Bulletin, Volume 10:1979); linkages between households and the market (Young et al:1981); the nature of gender relations in the developing world (Whitehead:1979); the interlinkage between production and reproduction (Bennholdt-Thomsen:1982).

The work of the second group is analytical and while what women do is seen as useful, examining why is more important⁶. Most of this work is produced by, or influenced by, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex University. Among this group the research concentrates on an analysis of women's subordination at a theoretical level, but there is strong emphasis on putting the research findings to practical use, on advising and influencing development policy. IDS type work also tries to establish links with researchers from the developing countries, to prevent ethnocentrism in their work. They argue that to concentrate on purely economic or purely cultural influences on women's lives is inadequate (Young, 1979:2). IDS type work attempts to analyse women's subordination at various levels, in its various forms and under varying conditions. They argue that the theoretical object of analysis cannot be

women but rather the relations between men and women in society, the gender relations. The fact that these relations are not always harmonious and egalitarian is an important factor in the analysis of women's subordination.

IDS type work has gone much further in analysing women's subordination both in the developing world and cross-culturally. However there were early criticisms because of an over-emphasis on economic themes at the expense of considering the nature of the family and questions of sexuality. It was felt that the ignoring of sexuality vitiated any attempt to understand the wider or more subtle aspects of women's subordination not reflected in the economic sphere (Young, 1979: 36). More recent work has tried to come to terms with this criticism and the gender relations of sexuality and the family have become important foci for investigation (Harris:1984, Morokvasic:1984). With its conceptualisation of gender relations out of the British context the IDS work seemed to be the best camp within which to place my thesis.

2.3.7 Conclusion

Three camps were therefore rejected and two seemed to be possibilities, however there was a problem. Neither of the labels seemed to exactly fit my thesis; it was not to be a piece of British radical feminist theory, nor was it strictly a piece of women and development work. Both camps had something to contribute to the thesis but their labels were not really transferrable. I decided to reject the notion of trying to fit into a camp that did not really encapsulate what I wanted to do in my thesis and turn instead to the notion of feminist concepts. What was more important was not **who** said **what**, but **what** they said.

Therefore camps of feminist theory were rejected in favour of feminist concepts.

2.4 Feminist Concepts

2.4.1 Introduction

While reading the feminist literature of the five camps described above various concepts emerged time and time again. While the concepts discussed below were not the only ones, they were the ones that emerged most often. While I knew that the thesis was to be about gender relations I had to consider other theoretical concepts in order to ascertain whether other concepts needed to be used in the thesis. Below then are brief discussions about the concepts of gender roles; gender relations; production and reproduction; capitalism and patriarchy. Whether they will be used or discarded by the thesis is also debated.

2.4.2 Gender roles

Gender roles were the preoccupation of much early feminist work. The difference between sex, biological differences between men and women, and gender, the socially constructed differences between men and women, was made explicit. In all societies the biological differences are the same, gender characteristics, however, are far from universal (Friedl: 1975, Rosaldo and Lamphere:1974, Rubin:1975). The concept of gender roles is used in the study of gender specific activities and behaviour, and gender stereotyping. Using the concept of gender roles, what women, and in some cases, men do, how they organise their time, what their daily lives involve became important areas of study. Inequalities between men and women in carrying out these activities were highlighted. The major

contribution of the concept of gender roles has been the description and quantification of the division of labour within society. The problem with the concept of gender roles is that while it describes inequalities it cannot explain them. I did not want the thesis to concentrate on gender roles and while they are useful sources of background information, they are not the theoretical concept for this thesis.

2.4.3 Gender relations

The nature of gender relations in the Caribbean is the known focus of the thesis but let us examine the concept as it has developed in feminist theory. The concept of gender relations grew out of a dissatisfaction with the concept of gender roles. The latter gave the impression that what men and women do in life was the problem, rather than the power relations between men and women (Whitehead, 1979:10). These power relations between men and women are socially constituted and not derived from biology (Rubin, 1975:158). Gender relations are not necessarily harmonious and non-conflicting. The concept of gender relations rejects the idea that the roles of men and women are complementary, and emphasises the conflictual nature of the relationship between them (Whitehead, 1984:93). Gender is always present. Women cannot escape being perceived as a particular gender in any social situation they become involved in (Foord and Gregson, 1986:199, Whitehead, 1979: 11). Gender as a characteristic leads to the social domination of women by men. Men as a category have power over women as a category through social, economic and political institutions. Gender relations vary over time and space. They may take many particular forms, patriarchal gender relations are one form, others could be matriarchal or egalitarian. While gender relations is a relatively new concept it is an important one in

the investigation of women's subordination, because it allows analysis of the underlying causes of women's subordination. It is this concept, as defined above, which will be the main focus of attention for study within the context of the Caribbean.

2.4.4 Production and reproduction

Production is the name given to the sphere of activities which produces commodities which in turn create surplus value. The sphere of production is also known as the workplace and the public sphere. It has traditionally been seen as the site of male activity, although feminists are increasingly studying the role of women in this sphere (Bryceson:1985, Cockburn:1983, Humphrey:1985. Kuhn and Wolpe:1978).

Reproduction is the name given to the sphere which reproduces labour power for use in the sphere of production. Such reproduction of the labour force takes place at the daily level, through the feeding, clothing of and caring for the workforce. It also take place at the level of generational reproduction through the birth of children which provide workers for the sphere of production and carers in the sphere of reproduction. The sphere of reproduction is also known as the domestic sphere and the private sphere. It has most commonly been associated with female activities (Delphy:1984, Gardiner:1979, Harris:1984, Maher:1984, Whitehead:1984).

Production and reproduction, and the interlinkages between the two are useful in an analysis of the economic situation in society. Gender relations are involved in both spheres and can be studied in that context, however they will be gender relations specifically concerned with economic aspects of life. My thesis is not primarily about the

economic situation in the Caribbean and so the concepts of production and reproduction are not that useful to it.

2.4.5 Capitalism

Capitalism is a specific form of economic organisation; a particular form of mode of production, in which the creation of surplus value is vital. Capitalism is theoretically gender blind, but the reasons for this are clear: for capitalism to reproduce requires that labour is conjoined with capital, but the nature of this labour remains unspecified. It is only at a much lower level of abstraction that the characteristics of labour (gender, race, age skill, etc.) become important, ie. at the level where individual capitals are competing against each other. From this, it follows that capitalism as a concept is not crucial to unpacking gender relations, although we will have to be alive to the possibility that the nature of gender relations in the Caribbean might well have a distinctive influence on the nature of labour in the Caribbean - which, in turn, might affect gender relations.

2.4.6 Patriarchy

As has been said above the definition of patriarchy is somewhat confused (Beechey:1979). Radical feminists claim that patriarchy is autonomous from all other structures, especially capitalism (Millet: 1971). Socialist feminists have not accepted the idea of patriarchy as the primary structure involved in the subordination of women and have chosen instead to investigate the relations between capitalism and patriarchy (Barrett:1980, Eistenstein:1979, Kuhn and Wolpe:1978). However, there is a general consensus that patriarchy is male domination of women.

In terms of what this thesis wishes to investigate, the nature of gender relations in the Caribbean, the best discussion of patriarchy and its connection with gender relations came from Foord and Gregson (1976). They define patriarchy as a form of gender relations in which men dominate women (Foord and Gregson, 1986:198). Patriarchy is a particular form of gender relations. Gender relations can take a variety of forms; they may be equal, they may be matriarchal but if men oppress women through gender relations then they are patriarchal. Patriarchy is therefore a useful conceptual tool to use in the thesis. It allows an identification of the nature of gender relations that may or may not be found in the Caribbean, in particular in Montserrat.

2.4.7 Conclusion

Through investigating the concept that arose from the feminist theory I was able to define what I meant by gender relations and also to define a particular form that the gender relations may take, that of patriarchal gender relations. Gender relations are the power relations that exist between men and women. They are present wherever there are men and women, although their form may change over time and space. They may vary in nature and be egalitarian, matriarchal or patriarchal. The specific task of this thesis is investigate the nature of gender relations in Montserrat. Once the conceptual decisions had been made I had to decide which areas of social organisation I would investigate the nature of gender relations within. From the feminist literature four areas emerged which seemed to be universal features of women's lives. Therefore, although the initial definitions were gathered from British feminist literature these areas would still be useful in a study based in the Caribbean.

2.5 Areas Of Social Organisation

2.5.1 Introduction

The four areas of social organisation discussed below have emerged from the feminist literature. They are not the only areas in which gender relations could be investigated, but they are universal features of women's lives. They are four key areas that are applicable for study in all societies. The areas are the household; the workplace; union patterns; and heterosexual behaviour. The discussion of each will be brief because the thesis considers Caribbean society, and the nature of these four social areas in that region will be investigated in depth in the following chapter. Here I just wish to present the basic concepts that were gathered from the feminist literature.

2.5.2 The household

One major debate which surrounds the social area of the household is that concerning the definition of the family and of the household. In many studies the two terms are used interchangeably (Harris, 1984:137). A frequent but often false assumption is that household units coincide with families. Prevailing family ideology under capitalism expects that members of a nuclear family should live together, and people not related in this way should not (Ibid, 138). There is a growing demand that the household and the family should be defined and treated separately, because in reality they are not always synonymous (Whitehead, 1984:94). Most household definitions use co-residence as their basic criteria.

Another problem with studies of the household are the assumptions about the relations between household members, whether they are economic, kinship, sexual or friendship. The general assumption has been that these

relations are harmonious and that the consumption of members is equal (Edholm et al:1977). Feminist work has shown that this is not the case and that the household can be a site of women's subordination depending on the nature of gender relations at play within the household. The subordination of women within the household can appear through a variety of ways, probably the most studied of which is the gender division of household labour (Delphy:1984, Gardiner:1979, Whitehead:1984).

Changes in the structure and form of households have been investigated but the nature of power relations within them have not (Harris:1984). Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh state;

"while the household is neither a natural unit nor a universal category, the domestic sphere, its separation from the public or social world, and relations between men and women within different households are fundamental to gender subordination." (1981:ix)

The household is therefore a separate social area from the family, it is the site of relations which are rarely harmonious or equal, and it is a potential site of women's subordination depending on the nature of gender relations found within it.

2.5.3 The workplace

Although the workplace has traditionally been seen as the place of male activity, feminist work has made it clear that it is an area in which women are involved too (Beechey:1982, Hall:1982, Pahl:1988, Scott and Tilley:1982, Walby:1986)⁷. There have been difficulties in evaluating women's role in the workplace because of the way the workforce has been conceptualised and the underestimation of women's contribution (Beneria: 1981, Boserup:1980).

Once the involvement of women in the workplace had been established, attention turned towards identifying the roles women played

in the workplace and the nature of the inequalities they face (Coote and Campbell:1982, Oakley:1981). The workplace has been identified as segregated both horizontally and vertically by gender; invariably it is women who occupy the lower and low-paid positions. Evaluation of the discrimination women face has focused on the nature of capital in the case of marxist and socialist feminists, but there is a growing debate which states that capitalism alone is not responsible for the subordination of women in the workplace but rather the combination of male dominance and capital (Eisenstein: 1979).

Attention has also been given to the status of women in the international division of labour and it is noted that the subordination of women found in industrial societies is now becoming a universal pattern of women's work (Elson and Pearson:1981, IDS Bulletin, 1979:19-25, Lim:1983, Pearson:1988).

Women are therefore involved in the workplace, although the extent of their involvement is sometimes hard to ascertain. Within the workplace they are discriminated against through legislation, trade union practices (Cockburn:1983, Walby:1986), through employers stereotypes (Elson and Pearson:1981), and through the nature of gender relations they meet in the workplace.

This thesis presents its definition of the workplace as the actual site where women go to work, as the legal legislation which directly affects women's employment, as the attitudes of employers and employment practices, and as the social perceptions about women's employment.

2.5.4 Union patterns

This section covers the nature of unions through which men and women become sexually involved. In British feminism most research has

focused on the nature of the legal marital union, although there are other unions which could be considered such as cohabitation, extra-marital affairs and sexual relationships that are not residential.

Almost everyone in Britain gets married at least once. Entry into marriage, the regulation of marriage, and control of the termination of a marriage, is in the hands of the state. The reason for such state control of marriage is that the state wishes to support a particular, exploitative relationship between men and women in which the wife provides the unpaid domestic services for the man and also makes a financial contribution when possible, supposedly in exchange for protection, assured upkeep and some right to the children (Barker:1978, Delphy:1984). Kate Young made the following statement about marriage;

"Marriage, and the social relations between men and women which flow from this contract, almost everywhere give men privileged command of women's labour, and the product of their labour, as well as exclusive right to women's sexuality." (1979:4)

It is clear therefore, that feminists view marriage as a conjugal contract which legally allows the direct exploitation of individual women by individual men.

One aspect of the exploitative nature of residential unions, in particular marriage, is the 'violent event' (Dobash and Dobash:1982, Whitehead:1976). In their study of violence against wives in Scotland, Dobash and Dobash state;

"The use of violence against women in their position as wives is not the only means by which they are controlled and oppressed but it is one of the most brutal and explicit expressions of patriarchal domination." (1980:ix)

The marital union is therefore seen as a site of women's subordination because of the way it allows men to exploit a woman's labour power and also gives him exclusive rights to her sexually. Far from giving her protection, the work of some researchers shows that a wife is more likely

to be assaulted in her own home by her husband than outside by anybody else (Dobash and Dobash:1980, Hamner:1978).

2.5.5 Heterosexual behaviour

This term is the one used to cover all aspects relating to sexuality, masculinity and femininity, biological reproduction and the care of children. It also includes ways in which heterosexual behaviour is controlled and reproduced, particularly through the use of violence.

The role sexuality plays in the social control of women is increasingly becoming recognised (Caplan:1987, Coward:1984, Hirschon:1978, Smart and Smart:1978). In questioning how patriarchy worked to oppress women a group of radical feminists repeatedly returned to the centrality of male sexuality as an issue, its forms and functions in the social control of women (Coveney et al, 1984:9). Out of this realisation came a study which then investigated how feminists, over time, had tried to challenge male control over sexuality, and the backlash men put up against such moves (Ibid:10)⁸. Alongside studies of sexuality, analysis of pornography and its role in defining sexuality and controlling women has developed (Dworkin:1981).

Masculinity and femininity have been shown to be defined in such a way that womanhood is defined in subordinate terms to manhood (Ardener,E:1975, Chodorow:1974). While definitions of masculinity and femininity vary between different cultures the universal fact remains that they are defined differently and femininity is always subordinate to that of masculinity.

The issue of biological reproduction and its role in the control of women by men was recognised by the earliest of feminists (Bessant:1877) and is still an issue that is strongly debated. Women's access to safe

and reliable methods of birth control and the right to abortion are the subject of academic literature as well as campaigns (Barrett and Roberts: 1978, Callaway:1978, Gordon:1977). Alongside the study of gender relations and biological reproduction there have been studies of the problems associated with having children and childcare (Oakley:1981, Rich:1982).

Investigation of the above aspects of sexuality showed that it is an important area of women's subordination and other feminist studies have gone on to consider the ways in which male control of this social area is maintained. Such studies have mostly concentrated on male violence against women; whether within marriage or the home (Dobash and Dobash: 1980, Pizzey:1974); through general violence out in the public sphere (Hamner:1978); to one of the most violent events of all, rape (Brownmiller:1975).

2.5.6 Conclusion

The above sections have discussed the nature of four areas of social organisation as they have been described by feminists. The linkages between the social areas and women's subordination have also been demonstrated. The four social areas have been shown to be of central importance to the study of the nature of gender relations.

2.6 Main Conclusion

This chapter has shown the intellectual trajectory which led through a varied and often confused literature. Why certain bodies of literature have been rejected was explained. The chapter argued that a better way to approach feminist literature was not to consider the camps

of feminist thought but rather the concepts which cut across those camps. The most useful concept was found to be that of gender relations, in particular patriarchal gender relations. The final section then presented some general conclusions about the nature of gender relations in four social areas which are critical to the subordination of women. Chapter III will now discuss the nature of gender relations within these four areas of social organisation in the Caribbean.

CHAPTER III
THE CARIBBEAN:
FOUR AREAS OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the four areas of social organisation identified in Chapter II in the context of the Caribbean. Then it will consider why researchers have given some of these areas of social organisation more attention than others. Material from the current literature known as Caribbean studies pertaining to the household, the workplace, union types and 'heterosexual behaviour' will then be reviewed. Each area will be discussed in turn with sub-divisions demarking the separate 'components' of each area.

3.2. Areas of Social Organisation in The Caribbean

Since this thesis is primarily an investigation of patriarchal gender relations in the Caribbean, the presentation of contextual material relating to the region will therefore be limited to areas specifically relevant to that topic; ie. the household, the workplace, union patterns and heterosexual behaviour. There is not the time nor the space to investigate the wider historical, political or economic aspects of the Caribbean region, although reference is made to material which has been useful in developing an understanding of these¹.

As we will see below there have been many studies of the Caribbean household but very few of these studies have concentrated on the gender relations within the household. The work has largely been descriptive, studying who lives in which type of household and in some cases the gender roles in the household. There have been very few studies that have considered the internal dynamics of the relations between household members.

The Caribbean workplace has also been a neglected area unless in discussions about production and the economic structure in general. The Women In the Caribbean Project (1984 & 1986) was the first study to consider the recent rise in women's employment throughout the Caribbean. As yet though there have been very few studies on the gender relations of the workplace (Yelvington: 1988a, 1989).

The nature of union patterns has been another area where researchers have focused their attention. Once again the work tends to be descriptive and only a few studies look into the nature of the power relations between the actors involved (Moses:1977, Rodman:1971).

Heterosexual behaviour has been studied either as a social area on its own, (Barrow:1982, 1986, Brody:1981, Dann:1987, Freilich and Coser: 1972) or in connection with some other areas such as the household or union patterns (Blake:1961, Smith:1988). In some cases the nature of the power relations between men and women has been the main focus of such a study and these have proved valuable. However, they have not attempted to evaluate the relative importance of the form of gender relations found in heterosexual behaviour to those found in other areas of social organisation.

Some areas have therefore been studied extensively but they have not been considered in connection with patterns of gender relations. First, before we review the literature let us consider why certain aspects of women's lives in the Caribbean have received more attention than others.

3.3. Women are More Than Lovers and Mothers

Certain aspects of women's lives in the Caribbean have been given more attention by researchers than others. As Brown points out;

"Most Caribbean ethnographies and sociological studies have emphasised topics related to domestic organisation. Household cycle and composition, mating patterns, domestic functions and the like have been of primary concern" (1975:149)

This point has also been made by Karen Fog Olwig (1985:128)

Hence there is much more information about the nature and structure of the Caribbean household and women's roles within those households than there is about women's roles in the workplace. Peake (1987) in her study of Guyanese women states that while they have had a long history of involvement in the workplace the State still defines them as mothers and fails to recognise their contribution to the economy and the environment. Dorian Powell in her study of the roles of Caribbean women clearly states;

"Much more...has been written about Caribbean women in the context of the family than is written about their work and other roles." (1984:101)

She continues;

"There has been a one-sided emphasis on women's role in the family and limited recognition or systematic assessment of their non-familial activities." (pp.117)

Women have therefore been studied as mothers in the family rather than as workers in the factory. Women have been classified according to the union type in which they are at the time of study but the gender relations they experience throughout the course of such unions have not been investigated. What we often learn, covertly, is what the researchers feel about the variety of union experiences of Caribbean women with the use of such terms as 'stability', 'instability', 'promiscuity', 'disorganised

family structure'. Very little is known about what the women themselves feel about their union patterns. Women's ideas about sexuality, biological reproduction and childcare are given less attention than measures of fertility and contraceptive use. There have, more recently, been exceptions to such approaches. (Brody:1981, Freilich and Coser:1972, MacCormack and Draper:1987, Roberts:1975, Roberts and Sinclair:1978, Rodman:1971), but these remain in the minority.

This section will first consider the practical reasons why some areas of Caribbean women's lives have been more the focus of investigation than others; and, second, consider the role of methodologies and cultural differences between researchers and the researched.

3.3.1. Practical difficulties in studying women of the Caribbean

First, in the case of the workplace and women's employment, statistical data until the 1970s have not presented an accurate picture of women's productive activities (Massiah:1984, 1986b);

"The census definition of 'work' automatically excludes the majority of women in the reproductive and productive age span who are involved mainly in household maintenance activities." (1984:51)

In 1980, a four week seminar on 'Women and Social Production in the Caribbean' noted that there was a problem with the statistical data available in the region. Employment statistics have broad categories which makes it impossible to analyse women's employment patterns in depth (1980:23). Women did not appear to be involved in the formal sectors of employment in any great numbers. This biasing of statistical data relating to the productive role has been extensively criticised in feminist literature (Beneria:1981, Bennholdt-Thomsen:1982, Boserup:1970, Taylor:1985, Young et al:1981) and in the Caribbean literature,

(Antrobus:1986, Bolles:1983, Gill:1984, Massiah:1984, 1986a&b, Safa:1986, WAND:1983). However, changes in the Caribbean Community census definitions have gone some way to correct the situation. In 1970, seven categories relating to the main activity of the population during the year preceding the census were used. They are as follows; worked, seeking first job, others seeking work, wanted work and available, home duties, student, retired/disabled.

Second, most studies of a particular section of society present a 'snapshot of time'. They are unable to demonstrate the flexibility of social organisation over time. This representation of the pattern of social organisation at a particular point in time has produced a static and thence unrealistic picture of social areas. This is especially true of the union patterns which most Caribbean women pass through at some point in their lives. In an attempt to rectify this, some authors described union patterns as a progression from the more 'unstable' visiting union to the more 'stable' legal union, passing through the intermediate stage of the 'quasi-stable' cohabitation union (Clarke:1957, Henriques:1949, Marks:1975, Smith,M.G:1963). As will be shown below this is not a reflection of the reality. Some visiting unions are stable over a long period of time, many women never go through the cohabitation stage, and some women may have a visiting union after the breakdown of their marriage.

Third, the area of sexuality, the attitudes and behaviour relating to it and ideas revolving around biological reproduction and childcare are difficult to investigate even in a cultural context within which the researcher has been raised (Coveney et al:1984). It is a difficult area to investigate when one is a researcher from outside the cultural context under study. At this level of intimate investigation the gender of the

researcher will take on even greater significance than usual. In the early stages of Caribbean research most researchers were men (Davenport:1961, Dirks:1972, Henriques:1949, Horowitz:1971, Marino:1970, Marks:1975, Mintz:1971, Otterbein:1965, Smith,M.G:1963, Smith,R.T:1956,1957,1971). It would be difficult for them to begin to empathise and sympathise with female respondents sufficiently well to earn their trust and so encourage them to talk about the most intimate aspects of their personal lives. Likewise it has been difficult for women researchers to gather such information from male respondents (Barrow:1986b)

3.3.2. Methodological and theoretical difficulties in studying Caribbean women

Some methodologies that have been used by the Caribbeanists have resulted in biases in the study of Caribbean women. Quantitative research provides data for conclusions at a general level. It demonstrates the general trends but tells us little about the particular events (Sayer:1984). The use of such methodologies allows for the use of quantitative material already collected in the area, such as censuses, statistical reports and surveys. This can mean that the researcher does not have to get personally involved with the individuals under study at anything other than a superficial level, if at all. This is criticised by Tony Whitehead in his discussion about the schools of thought which attempt to explain Caribbean family patterns;

"Most of the studies supporting the social pathology explanation, however, were carried out by social scientists who had little contact with the social milieu they were studying." (1978:817)

This has led to a type of research termed 'jet in, jet out' by some academics of the University of West Indies, (Jeannette Bell of WAND, personal communication). It is also a criticism levelled at some

researchers by the people supposedly under study, (Ms. Annie Dyer-Howe, Minister for Health and Education, Montserrat, personal communication). The speed and limited extent of such research does not allow the researcher time to learn more about the intricacies of social interaction and behaviour of the people under study.

Qualitative methods do not provide extensive data but they do present a deeper picture of the social organisation of the area under study. Qualitative methods, for example, allow the researcher to reach the gender relations experienced by those involved in a specific union type rather than just the number of people involved in such a union type at a particular point in time. In order to collect adequate material the researcher has to spend a considerable amount of time living among the people they wish to study. Such a type of research may well be termed 'jet in, stay in, at least for a while'.

Recent work has tried to redress the imbalance not only between quantitative and qualitative research but also the imbalance between the researcher who comes from outside the community and presents their interpretation of what they found, and that of what Caribbean women themselves experience. Such work has allowed Caribbean women to speak for themselves rather than putting words into their mouths. A striking example of such an attempt, while not being an academic piece of work, is that of the oral histories of Jamaican women collected by the Sistren collective (1986). Here great care was taken to record the stories in the vernacular patwah. Academics who have allowed Caribbean women to express themselves are those who come from within the Caribbean or who have lived and/or studied there for many years (Anderson:1984,1986, Barrow:1986,a&b, Brodber:1984,1986, Clarke:1986, Durant-Gonzales:1982,1986, Ellis et al:1986, Gill:1984, Jackson:1982, McKenzie:1982,1986, Massiah:

1982,a&b, 1984,1986a,b&c, Powell:1982,1986, Safa:1986, White:1986)

Most of the above have contributed to the Women in the Caribbean Project (WICP) conducted by the Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of West Indies in Barbados. What the WICP has tried to develop is a body of data which will provide a starting point for more in-depth studies of Caribbean women's lives in the future (Massiah:1986a). It has attempted to break the stereotyped moulds in which Caribbean women had been constricted by earlier research and show that women are more than mothers and lovers. They investigated women's roles in the household: the nature of the household division of labour (Powell:1986); the intra- and inter-household networks women draw upon (Barrow:1986a, Powell:1982); the coping strategies of families (Durant-Gonzales:1982); the flexibility and fluidity of household organisation (McKenzie:1982); and the specific forms of female-headed households (Massiah:1982b). They investigated women's roles in the workplace: where they work (Massiah:1986b); why they work (Barrow:1986a); how they juggle their roles as mothers and workers (Powell:1986); and the problems women as workers face (Massiah:1986b). The roles and participation of women in education, national and local organisations, politics and the legal system were not neglected (Clarke:1986, McKenzie:1986). The WICP has not only tried to represent women in a truer light at the current time but also to amend for some of the wrongs done to women by researchers in the past. Brodber's (1986) collection of oral histories from Jamaican women who talk of their lives in the early years of this century demonstrates that the variety of women's life experiences is not a modern phenomenon. Brereton (1988) also reminds us of the need for feminist historiographies to develop greater understanding of the roles women have played in the past.

This thesis argues that the concentration of earlier researchers

(Clarke:1957, Davenport:1961, Otterbein:1965, Smith,M.G.:1962, Smith,R. T.:1956,1957, Solien:1969,1965) on the role of Caribbean women as mothers and on their place in the domestic sphere and there alone, probably tells us more about the gender relations in which the researchers themselves were embedded than the nature of gender relations found in the Caribbean. Karen Fog Olwig makes a similar point;

"It has been argued that anthropologists have not been concerned with understanding Afro-Caribbean social structure on its own terms as much as with 'explaining' the West Indian family, because it departs from established conceptions of normal family structure ...This concentration [on family structure] was caused not only by theoretical considerations but by ethnocentric, moral concerns." (1985:129)

The apparent inability of researchers to rid themselves of their own cultural stereotypes about what was deemed acceptable for women to do was also highlighted by Mintz and Price (1985). In their introduction they stated that Caribbean literature has captured the reality of women's lives more successfully than academic studies have (for example, Cliff: 1989; Collins:1987; Hodge:1970; Johnson:1988; Nichols:1986; Osbourne: 1979; Philipps:1985). They suggest that this may be because it is so hard to shed one's own perspective about gender and so consider gender issues in another culture (Mintz & Price, 1985:8).

This thesis has tried not to fall into the trap of constricting Montserratian women within the strait-jacket of British stereotyped ideas about what women are doing and where they are doing it. With a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods it has allowed the women to discuss their own lives in their own words. However, the study concentrated on certain aspects of social organisation, namely the household, the workplace, union patterns and 'heterosexual behaviour'.

3.4. The Components to be Reviewed

This section will briefly explain why certain components of the above mentioned areas of social organisation are to be reviewed. Diagram 3.1 shows the concept to be used which emerged from Chapter II, the components of the four areas of social organisation within the Caribbean, and the broad grouping of the components as they will be presented in the four empirical chapters. An explanation about why the components were selected is given below.

The components which are presented in the following literature review are those that have emerged from the literature on Caribbean social organisation. However, it is a more complex pattern than one of, for example, 'in studies of the household the following components have been considered...' Some authors studying the same social area put emphasis on different components. Others consider the same components but reach different conclusions about them. The time scale is also important as earlier researchers have paid less attention to components which later researchers have deemed to be the most important. Another complicating factor is that many components are considered almost incidentally to others. For example, there has not been a study carried out on the gender divisions of household labour in the Caribbean. However, it is possible to learn something about such divisions of labour through studies which have investigated male dominance and female status (Moses:1977), household networks (Powell:1982) and coping strategies (Durant-Gonzales:1982).

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a review and criticism of the literature on the Caribbean areas of social organisation and the components that are part of them².

Diagram 3.1

Concept to be used

Areas of social
organisation

Components of the areas
in the Caribbean

Components of the
empirical chapters

Household

Household verses the family
Development of household patterns
Household classifications
Head of household
Household structure & dynamism
Gender division of labour
Decision making patterns

Household structure
Household gender division
of labour
Household decision-making
Household networks

Workplace

Nature of employment
Gender division of labour
Attitudes to female employment
Problems for women employees
Men's attitudes to women working
Employment and power in the home

Montserratian economy
Montserratian employment
Employment opportunities
Workplace segregation
Women's ideas about employment
Employers ideas
Problems women face
Employers attitudes

Union Patterns

Terminology used
Variety of union types
Dynamism, flexibility and stability
Legal status
Social status
Men's and women's attitude to unions

Figures for union patterns
Current union patterns
Marriage
Marriage rates
Cohabitation
Visiting unions

**Heterosexual
Behaviour**

Definitions of sexuality
Masculinity and femininity
Sexual double standard
Attitude to members of opposite gender
Contraception and abortion
Beginning sexual behaviour
Attitudes towards children
Childcare responsibilities
Social censure and control
Violence related to gender

Sexuality
Biological reproduction
Children
Social control

Gender
Relations

3.5 The Caribbean Household

In this section various components relating to the institution of the Caribbean household which emerge from the literature will be discussed. This section divides roughly into two parts. The first part deals primarily with theoretical issues relating to the concept of household and the development of the Caribbean household form. The second part deals mainly with descriptions of certain features associated with the Caribbean household.

3.5.1 The household versus the family debate

Nancie Solien-Gonzales has been the Caribbeanist to have argued most clearly for a distinction to be made between the household and the family. This was in response to the fact that most anthropologists studying the region continued to confuse the two (1981:422). For example, R.T.Smith (1957) states;

"Household groups come into being when a man and a woman enter a conjugal union and set up house together." (1957:69)

Solien-Gonzales and this thesis disagree with this definition. A conjugal union is not a prerequisite for the formation of a household. She states;

"It is my view that some distinction between family and household...is not only useful but necessary in dealing with Caribbean society. It seems to me that the fact that some households contain no family as ordinarily defined by an anthropologist is one of the most important characteristics of Caribbean society." (1981:425)

She goes on to define the family as a group of people bound together by kinship ties, with at least two being linked conjugally. The household, on the other hand, implies common residence, economic co-operation and the socialisation of children. She argues that a family may or may not form a household, a household may or may not contain a family (1981:427)

Other authors have also stressed the importance of making this distinction between the household and the family (Ashcraft:1968, Fog-
Olwig:1985, McKenzie:1982, M.G.Smith:1962, R.T.Smith:1988)

It is essential to analyse households and families separately, but the areas where they overlap should also be considered, for example in the case of inter-household networks. A household is defined here as the place where the respondent (and others identified by them) sleep, eat and perform domestic duties for the majority of their time. Respondents were asked simply to describe the place where they lived, to identify who else lived there, and the nature of relationships between themselves and these other members. In the Caribbean the term 'family' is understood to mean anyone one is related to. This is evident in such terms as 'that boy there, he family to me on my mother's side', 'well, she is family to my father.' (Rodman,1971:146)

3.5.2 The development of the Caribbean household pattern

Much of the early Caribbean studies about social organisation were concerned to identify how the distinctive patterns developed. Initially there were three schools of thought. In 1949, Herskovits and Herskovits argued that the Caribbean domestic pattern was a modified form of the African polygyny pattern, and that the slaves had tried to perpetuate this form of organisation as much as possible; after emancipation the African influence developed more strongly. At a similar time, Henriques (1949) and M.G.Smith (1962), were arguing that the pattern arose due to the effects of slavery and the plantation system. The African population had been forced into certain forms of domestic arrangements whereby men and women resided separately and children were raised apart from their mothers by nursemaids. After emancipation such separation became less

rigid but a co-residential conjugal union pattern was never to become the norm. Later authors argued that neither of the above explanations were correct but that economic factors were responsible for the current Caribbean pattern (Clarke:1957, Greenfield: 1966, R.T.Smith:1956, Solien-Gonzales:1969). In times of economic difficulties mothers could depend more on resources from their kinsfolk than from a conjugal partner. The husband-father figure therefore became marginalised. Such marginalisation of men and the centrality of women, their children and relatives in the household was further exacerbated when male migration to the UK and the USA became an important way to escape the economic insecurities of the Caribbean region.

Whitehead (1978) considered the three schools of thought and termed them respectively, the 'cultural diffusion' school, the 'social pathology' school and the 'structural-functionalist' school. It is the latter school of thought that has found most favour with recent authors. Marks (1978) argues that in Curacao as communities enjoyed economic development due to the opportunities of increased male employment from the establishment of the Shell oil refinery, then household forms and family unions became more stable. The nuclear family residing in a single household increasingly became the norm. Dirks and Kearns (1976) came to similar conclusions in their study in Tortola (U.S.Virgin Islands) and said that the shortage of employment encouraged the high rates of extra-legal mating.

It is unlikely that African patterns will have been maintained unchanged over more than three centuries in any shape or form. To argue that the current Caribbean pattern is an example of social disfunction indicates ethnocentrism and a lack of an open-minded approach to alternative domestic patterns other than the so-called 'ideal' nuclear

family. The economic marginalisation approach is also rejected. In all societies there are people suffering economic difficulties yet the household pattern of the Caribbean remains distinct to that area. An economic explanation denies any active choice on the part of the household members themselves.

3.5.3 The variety of household classifications

Caribbean domestic organisation is highly complex and does not lend itself to broad classifications. However Caribbeanists have tried and continue in their attempt to develop such classifications of typologies. Simey (1946) was probably the first to attempt a family/household classification. He distinguished between;

- "1)The 'Christian family' with a religiously and legally confirmed marriage and a 'patriarchal order';
- 2)The 'faithful concubinage', also possessing a 'patriarchal order' and lasting for at least three years, but possessing no legal status;
- 3)The 'compassionate family', lasting for less than three years and based on ad hoc membership; and
- 4)The 'disintegrate family', comprising a woman and her children and not based on any lasting relationship between a man and a woman." (1946:82)

Henriques (1953) created a slightly different typology substituting the 'compassionate family' with the 'maternal or grandmother family' and using instead of 'disintegrate family' the term 'keeper family'. This term referred to the domestic group consisting of a mother and her children, where the woman has a non-resident male as a sexual and economic partner.

Goldberg (1976) in a study of Grand Cayman island presents an alternative typology which includes: a family household; a denuded household where the male partner leaves; a non-localised household where the male partner is absent for economic reasons; a single person

household; and a sibling household.

While some parts of these typologies may be adequate to describe particular communities at certain points in time there remain distinct inadequacies. A major criticism is that it is not made clear which adult member of the household the classification by union status is based upon. It is common for more than one adult to live in a Caribbean household. Each adult could be involved in a different type of union. Hence a classification by union status of one adult member would fail to capture the true variety of the household structure. Classifications are static but Caribbean households are far from static as will be shown below. Some have attempted to capture greater dynamism through the introduction of a time factor (Clarke:1957, Davenport:1961, Mintz:1971, Solien-Gonzales:1969) They recognised three patterns of conjugal union, (using a variety of terms); the visiting union where the partners live separately but have a sexual, emotional, and possibly economic union; the consensual union, where partners cohabit without legal recognition; and marriage. It was argued that at different points in their life cycle adults would pass through these union forms, and the concomitant household formations, from the visiting union through to marriage. While this approach allowed for greater dynamism it did not make it clear that not every one followed all of these stages. Also they failed to acknowledge that many men may have formed a household based upon a conjugal union but may be involved sexually and economically with other women in different households.

Later authors have not attempted classifications but rather note certain characteristics of the domestic organisation of the particular community under study (Ashcraft:1968, Brana-Shute:1976, Justus:1981, Massiah:1982, Roberts:1975, Rodman:1971, Smith,R.T.:1988, Sutton & Makiesky-Barrow:1977). They make it clear that households and families

are rarely synonymous. This latter approach is the most realistic way to represent and study the Caribbean household. In an investigation of the gender relations in the household some form of categorisation is necessary but it must be one that has been developed from the fieldwork on the community under study and which is an accurate reflection of the domestic organisation found therein.

3.5.4 Problems with the head of household

Powell (1982) points out that headship is hard to count due to cultural and patriarchal traditions. It is always assumed that the male should be the household head and this is backed up with references to the Bible. Men are stated to be the household heads whether they take on all the major responsibilities in the household or not. Few women admit to joint headship although that is probably nearer the reality. Women almost never state themselves to be the household head when there is an able-bodied male in the home, whatever the true situation as far as running the household is concerned. This point is made clear by Massiah;

"In the Caribbean where matrifocality of the family is stressed but male authoritarianism is the ideal, there may well be the tendency to overstate male headship." (1982b:69)

Early authors simply took male-headship for granted and never questioned the concept (Cohen:1955, Henriques:1953, Simey:1946). Later writers have acknowledged that assessment of true headship is difficult (Marks,1975b: 139, Rodman:1971, Safa:1986). Others have concentrated solely on the concept of the female-headed household, which make up at least 30% of all households, and the particular difficulties faced by them (Change:n.d., Lesser Blumberg:1975, Massiah:1982b, Powell:1982, Shorey-Bryan:1986). Such studies have made an important contribution in providing an understanding of what was previously an unacknowledged feature of

Caribbean domestic organisation.

This thesis did not consider the concept of head of household as a separate component in the empirical work. Associating headship with one particular person masks the dynamic power relations between and responsibilities taken by adults in the household.

3.5.5 Caribbean household structure and dynamism

It has been mentioned above that the Caribbean household is highly flexible. Recent Caribbeanists have acknowledged such flexibility and have attempted to describe and, in some cases, account for it. In his study of an Afro-Trinidadian village Rodman found;

"Another sign of the open organisation is the ease with which changes in household composition takes place, whether for a few weeks, months or years...It is clear that there was a great deal of turnover in household composition of a temporary or perhaps permanent nature." (1971:101,102)

Households change their composition due to the movements of the adults and children who move between them. As R.T.Smith points out;

"The 'functions' generally assumed to be those of the domestic group may be divided among a number of separate agencies; individuals may divide their time between a number of houses, keeping clothes in several different places and sleeping wherever is convenient." (1988:150)

This is mostly the case for men not in a residential union and children who may move between relatives, especially maternal relatives (Ashcraft, 1968:64).

Brana-Shute notes;

"To say at one point that so many percentage of a sample of people lives in this or that type of domestic arrangement overlooks the dynamic in West Indian social organisation." (1976:56)

Brown (1975:150) suggests that flexible household structures are found among the lowest economic sectors and could be an adaptive mechanism they are forced to adopt in order to cope with financial

stress. This raises an important question of whether such household dynamism and flexibility is true for all classes. There has been little work to date which considers the middle and upper classes' domestic organisation in the same depth as that of the lower classes. While not facing the same economic difficulties, flexible formations may still be a feature of middle and upper class households due to the outward migration for advanced education and employment opportunities.

It is clear, therefore, that household composition in the Caribbean is dynamic. The dynamism is partly due to the changing of partners and union types, or it may simply be a matter of personal relationships coming into conflict. Children change households either moving to live with an elderly single woman in the village to 'keep her company' or moving between relatives who can offer them different opportunities at different times, whether it is childcare or better educational chances. Conflicts between children and adult household members, in particular a mother's new male partner, may mean that the children have to move into a different household, usually with relatives of their mother but occasionally with those of their own father.

3.5.6 The gender division of household labour

This is an important component to consider in a study of gender relations in the household. The division of domestic labour is usually based on gender. It is an important indicator of women's position within the household. The more labour women contribute the greater the benefit to the menfolk in that household, and possibly the more patriarchal the gender relations connected with domestic labour. It is also an area where women themselves directly feel the effect of patriarchal gender relations and may find it the easiest area to articulate.

Powell states that women are responsible for most of the housework, especially that done inside the home (1984:104). She points out that many women feel their role as homemaker is very important and one that they should maintain, but that many state that their sole responsibility for the children is often a source of stress and concern for them, especially if they are employed. Moses found that both men and women considered housework unsuitable for men so that even when the wife goes into employment, men still do not help (1977:148, 150). Gill makes the point that in Barbados, women may be doing home-duties full-time as well as a variety of income-earning activities (1984:17). Most women in the Caribbean experience the dual role and burden of being both full-time homemaker and employee.

While Moses found that boys did not help, other sources show that children are frequently identified as a source of help with housework, and are often more helpful than male adult members of the household (Rodman, 1971:83, 84). Girls usually carry out tasks in the home and boys in the yard but in the absence of sisters or brothers inside work will be done by boys and outside work by girls. Hence the strict division of labour between adults is not always maintained for the children.

According to R.T.Smith the gender role differences between older men and women diminish and this eases the relations between them (1988:136). It is common for grandfathers to play a larger role in the care of their grandchildren than they did in that of their own.

Henry and Wilson (1975) make the point that in times of need, ie. the absence of the mother from home, or her illness, the men of the household may well perform the necessary household duties and often quite competently. In his study of Barbadian males, Dann questioned respondents about the division of labour in the home. He found that most men favoured

the sharing of domestic duties including preparing meals and cleaning but that several indicated they felt outside work was more suitable for them (1987:55). His study indicates that there has either been a change in attitudes towards household labour on the part of men in recent years or that while they may advocate the sharing of labour few of them actually do so.

Lynn Bolles makes the point that for many women the amount of domestic labour they have to perform may depend upon the kind of union they are in. In a residential union they may have to be responsible for all the household chores whereas in a visiting union they may share their workload with other female relatives (1983:148)

It is apparent therefore that while there are indications of some flexibility over the gender division of household labour, the divisions between adult members remains fairly constant with women shouldering the bulk of the responsibilities for most of the time.

3.5.7 Decision-making patterns in the household

Once again this is an area that has been explored little in the Caribbean context and yet is essential to an analysis of household gender relations. Of those authors who do consider this component, most find that women have relative little power in households they share with male partners and yet may bear all the responsibilities. Henry and Wilson (1975) point out that the absence of men due to outward migration frequently left women in sole charge of their households and yet they would lose this power on the men's return, often many years later. They state that in marriage, men have full authority in the household and women have to resort to devious means to achieve what they want.

Moses found that in Montserrat, the middle class man exercised more

authority in the household due to his financial contribution and the fact that he was present more often; he was able to enforce that authoritarian role. She states that it was assumed that working class families were female centred and men were marginal, but she found that for married women, at both economic levels, the husband is seen as the head of the household (1977:143, 144).

Henriques found a similar pattern when he assigned economic control patterns to his household classification. In households with married couples men had greater economic control; where men and women cohabited, women had a share in the financial decisions and may even dominate. In maternal families the oldest female would have economic control, and in the 'keeper' relationship men and women would keep their earnings separate (1953:116). Walker too found that women have the burden of the day-to-day running of the household but the men of the household have the authority, even if they are not present all the time (1968:114). Rodman makes the important point that while lower class women are frequently said to exercise considerable control in their matrifocal household, this power means they are free to develop their full potential but that they have additional burdens; for these women increased autonomy means increased responsibility (1971:183). However, it is these same women who can draw upon household networks which do not threaten their independence. For many women this remains a favourable option rather than allowing a patriarchal man into their home.

Hence it appears that the decision-making power and authority is determined more by whether a male partner, and in particular a married male partner, is present in the household rather than the economic position of that household.

More recent studies (Dann:1987, WICP:1986) have revealed

contradictions between what people state is the ideal way of organising a household and establishing power relations, and the way they actually live out this ideal as individuals. Safa indicates that, although the situation is difficult for women, many of them underestimate the contribution they make to the household and many appear to accept the ideological norm of male dominance in the household (1986:10).

3.5.8 Inter-household networks

As early as 1957, R.T.Smith argued that there was too much concentration on the household and not enough on the networks between them. He himself has now studied networks by looking at kinship genealogies and identifying who people interact with at the level of a network (1988). McKenzie makes a similar point and states that most researchers either adopt the 'household' approach or the 'family-network' approach but fail to recognise that both factors are at work; the interplay between the two should be the focus of study (1985:xi). Karen Fog-Olwig makes the same point in her study of St.John, U.S.Virgin Islands (1985:157)

Networks and reciprocal relationships between both household members and separate households are an essential area of study in a consideration of women's subordination and the gender relations with which they are involved. It appears to be mostly women involved in establishing and maintaining these networks (Justus,1981:440, Sutton & Makiesky-Barrow,1977:308). While gender relations may not be at play in them, the very existence and need for such female-centric networks is an indication of the gender relations experienced by women in the household and the wider social community.

Norma Shorey-Bryan points out that;

"Since women's search for economic and emotional security with men is often unsuccessful, Caribbean women have had to develop other ways to cope with their family responsibilities. Coping strategies include support networks where grandmothers, aunts and cousins are available to assist in child-rearing and also with emotional and practical support." (1986:70)

Powell found that Caribbean women were embedded in social networks and they play a large part in interpersonal relationships (1982:142). Lynn Bolles in her study of working-class Jamaican women found that women's networks extended beyond the family yard to households of friends who may live some distance away (1983:150). Massiah argues that such networks are a way of adapting to difficult economic situations and in developing a sense of solidarity (1982:85). In St. John, Fog-Olwig found that the exchange of children intensified relationships between households (1985:134)

It is clear therefore that inter-household exchange networks are especially important for women at the lower end of the socio-economic scale and for those who cannot rely on male partners to provide adequate or necessary support. However they do not only perform an economic function. There is evidence that women gain in other ways from these networks. For example, middle and upper class women also develop female networks as part of their social and emotional lives. (McCormack & Draper, 1979:149, Moses, 1976)

3.5.9 Conclusion

The various components which contribute to a discussion of the Caribbean household have been presented. Contradictions within the literature have been identified such as the contrasting definitions of what constitutes a household and how the pattern of household formations developed. Certain assumptions and inaccuracies have been challenged, in

particular those which presume a progression through less stable household forms to more stable ones. Difficulties which arise with attempts to classify households and the definition of the household head have been shown. Household dynamism, in both structure and membership, and household networks have been shown to be a distinctive feature of Caribbean household organisation. The two final components of the gender division of household labour and decision-making power demonstrate the varying patterns of gender relations which are determined by the household structure.

3.6 The Caribbean Workplace

The workplace is an important institution to study in a consideration of gender relations in the Caribbean. There is a long tradition of women being employed in the region, although it may not have always been adequately recognised (Gill,1984:9, Massiah,1984:76). In the workplace women will encounter different individuals to those within their domestic sphere. The men they meet in the workplace are unlikely to be partners or close relatives. A different pattern of gender relations will therefore come into play and it is the form and maintenance of these relations which will be considered in the empirical chapter. Below, the various components of the workplace that emerge from the literature are presented.

3.6.1 The nature of employment opportunities for women

From the time of emancipation up until the early 1970's uneducated women had few options for paid employment. They were either agricultural labourers, higglers (market traders) or domestics for the higher social

classes. Educated women became nurses, teachers or civil servants. Through the 1970s, with the onset of economic development, agriculture was modernised and women were forced out. Sutton & Makiesky-Barrow found that in Barbados women have equality with men in agriculture but are concentrated in the unskilled categories and it is these which are lost with economic development (1977:300). Women were not absorbed into the new growth sectors at the same rates as men (Gill,1984:23, Young & Rivera Quintero,1980:88). The sexual division of labour became increasingly pronounced. Despite an expansion of the tertiary sector educated women's options remain those of teaching, nursing and clerical work and they invariably fill the lower levels of these professions.

The main area of expansion for women's employment at the secondary/manufacturing level has been through the multinational 'off-shore' plants. Attracted by the offers of low tax rates, controlled wage rates, political stability and a relatively well-educated female workforce, companies have moved into some of the Caribbean islands. Such companies offer a reprieve in the very high unemployment rates for women especially in the cases of Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. They are a mixed blessing as they slightly improve women's opportunities for employment but in the more unstable areas of industry (Gill,1984:23). Also the reprieve is only temporary (Yelvington,1988b:27a). Once the tax concessions expire or the employees begin to organise the companies withdraw in search of newer pastures to exploit³. At the same time as losing jobs upon economic modernisation, women are not being absorbed into the newly expanding workforce. While there have been some changes in employment opportunities, these have not always meant an improvement.

3.6.2 The gender division of labour in the workplace

It appears that under conditions of slavery there was relatively little segregation of tasks by sex, either vertically or horizontally. Sutton & Makiesky-Barrow note;

"On the slave plantation both sexes were equally involved in the 'public' world of work, and both were equally exploited"(1977:293)

and further;

"While male and female tasks may have differed somewhat on the plantation, considerations of age and health were more important than sex in organising work." (1977:295)

Male and female slaves were not seen as anything but units of labour (Fog-Olwig, 1985:55, Mathurin Mair:1975)

Since those times a marked gender division of labour in the workplace has developed and there appears to have been very little change despite economic development (Powell:1984). Women remain concentrated in the traditional female jobs of clerical and service occupations. For the educated women teaching and nursing remain the professional occupations. There is therefore a clear horizontal gender division. Within the employment sectors there is also a division by gender, ie. vertical segregation. Yelvington (1988a) notes that in his Trinidadian study factory there were no female supervisors, or any women in positions of authority. Dann in his study of Barbados notes;

"Overall men occupy 84.5% of the top positions in Barbadian society, leaving women the paltry remainder. Females have to be content to fill the vacancies of salesclerks, bank tellers, secretaries and primary schoolteachers, at the top end of their occupational hierarchy; and seamstresses, domestics, agricultural labourers and hawkers at the bottom. Those inbetween, such as garment factory workers and electronic component assemblers, are the first to bear the brunt of redundancy as businesses close down. So too does unemployment always hit the female population harder, particularly among school-leavers, where the rate can be as high as 40%" (1987:7)

According to Norma Shorey-Bryan there appears to be little chance of change not only in the economic situation but in social attitudes about the 'correct' gender division of labour. In her studies with Barbadian school-children she found acceptance of the traditional gender division of employment (1986:72).

Gender divisions of labour are important in a consideration of gender relations in the workplace because the subordination of women is expressed in such divisions. While the divisions may be based on those found in the household, once in the workplace they acquire a dynamic of their own and it is this dynamic which needs investigation (Young & Rivera Quintero, 1980:32).

3.6.3 Attitudes to female employment: employees and employers

If the employment opportunities and conditions of work are so unfavourable for women, then why do they work? Economic necessity is obviously a major explanation but studies of women's employment have found more positive reasons. Powell found that women wanted to earn more than enough to get by, but enough for complete economic independence. That they not only work because of poverty but because they see work as a legitimate sphere for their involvement (1984:112). Gill also found that women value work for the sense of freedom and independence it brings (1984:20). Women liked to work and felt good about it, especially as they did not have to 'beg anymore'. Smith found that middle class women worked for the personal satisfaction it brought them (1988:127)

Relatively little research has considered the attitude of employers, however what there is reveals that employers in the region have a clear cut and surprisingly consistent attitude towards female employees. (Although it should be said that these views are largely those

of non-Caribbean employers or those managing non-Caribbean firms.)

Yelvington found that employers preferred to employ young girls without children as they were seen as more reliable, and did not need time off from work to look after their children. However, as he points out, precisely because women are the sole source of support for their children would probably make them more dependable because they had a family (1988a). Multinational companies have not understood the reality of Caribbean social organisation because they believe that unmarried women have only themselves to support and that if women lose their jobs they would have some man to look after them (Bolles:1983, Young and Rivera Quinto:1980). In each case a distinct lack of understanding of the nature of Caribbean social organisation is clear. Ethnocentrism appears again.⁴

3.6.4 Problems women as employees face

In such a gender division of labour, women are typically forced into low paid and marginal jobs (Antrobus:1986, Durant-Gonzales:1982, Ellis:1981, Sutton & Makiesky-Barrow:1977). Even within jobs women are paid less than men. In Jamaica, Whitehead found that women in factory job categories were paid less than men, even though they did the same work (1978:821). In the 'traditional' female professions of nursing, teaching and the civil service, although women may have better educational qualifications than men, they are repeatedly overlooked at times of promotion. Antrobus argues that where women do reach positions of seniority it is because of the relative shortage of skills in society rather than a lack of discrimination (1986:46).

Women have little trade union representation to fight against such discrimination. Where they are involved in unions they face further

discrimination because women do not reach the positions of power within the unions (Glendon, 1986:62).

Discrimination was most apparent in the civil service. Until the mid 1970's the marriage bar prevented postmistresses and civil servants from marrying if they wanted to keep their jobs (Roberts & Sinclair: 1978). Also unmarried pregnant nurses and teachers would be asked to resign, although many were offered their jobs back once they had had the child. Such practices are no longer part of legislation but there appear to be some informal rules relating to pregnant unmarried teachers who are asked not to teach once their pregnancy begins to show.

Many islands have only recently introduced any form of maternity leave. The conditions vary across the region and it appears that it is quite difficult to enforce in the private sector. However the position for women in most areas of Government employment has shown a marked improvement over the past five to ten years.

Yelvington (1988a, 1989) found that sexual harassment of female employees was a common problem. It had reached such a point that it was the subject of the winning song of the Calypso Queen in 1986 in Trinidad. It is frequently mentioned in the case studies of Brody (1981), Roberts (1975) and in the life-stories recorded by Sistren (1986).

Massiah (1982) draws attention to the lack of childcare facilities in many of the islands. As women move into the urban areas they cannot always depend on extended family networks to care for their children and state provision of nursery care is insufficient. These women may have to resort to keeping their older children away from school or have to leave the child in unsafe conditions. Governments and private industry have been slow to improve the situation.

Employed women in the Caribbean therefore have to face various

problems in addition to those faced with the juggling of a family and a job.

3.6.5 Attitudes of men towards women working

This is a relatively unresearched area. In the literature that does exist there appear to be some contradictions. Henry & Wilson (1975) found that married women were discouraged from finding employment by their husbands. Cohabiting partners were not so restrictive. Moses (1977) found a similar attitude among middle class men in Montserrat who felt that their wives going out to work shamed the family as it indicated that the husband could not afford to look after his wife and family adequately.

Alternatively Sutton & Makiesky-Barrow found that men accepted the idea of their wives working (1977:308). Barrow (1986b) found a similar response from men of all social levels. She found that the men felt it was a woman's responsibility to help maintain the household, although this was given more emphasis for cohabiting women than married women. She did find that some men feared the social relationships women could develop through their workplace and feared their infidelity. They demonstrated a preference for their partners to work in female-dominated workplaces.

Dann found that when the men were asked about women's employment their responses indicated that they saw women's employment as a threat to their own employment and they felt that where women did work they should be given subordinate positions (1987:67). It would appear therefore that men no longer actively disapprove of women's employment, but feel that it should be controlled, and that women should always be in a subordinate position to that of men.

3.6.6 Women's employment and power in the home

Concomitant with the little research done on women as workers has been a lack of study into the effect their employment may have on their decision making power. Safa states that little is known about how recent economic changes in the region have affected relative gender positions (1986:3). Henry and Wilson (1975) found that employment gives women more determination to say what they think about matters concerning the household. Powell found that women's economic participation has a powerful influence on family relationships and on women's status in the family and society (1976:234).

However, Smith found that in cases of both partners working, the ideal of them contributing towards the advancement of the family was rarely fulfilled (1988:127). Moses found that in Montserrat, most skilled women did not feel that their employment gave them more power in the household (1977:148).

The apparent contradictions found in these studies become less when we view them in the context of gender relations. Henry and Wilson and Powell found that women felt that their employment contributed a great deal to their decision-making power in their households. Smith and Moses found that women's employment had little influence on such power vis-a-vis their husbands. Hence it appears that when women enter a particular form of gender relations, those associated with marriage, their economic contribution no longer enhances their decision-making power.

3.6.7 Conclusion

This section has reviewed what Caribbean studies have said about the employment of women. It has only recently become a focus of study but that is not because Caribbean women have only just begun to work.

Difficulties with statistical analysis of employment were mentioned. The nature of employment opportunities open to women and both the horizontal and vertical gender divisions of labour within the workforce have been presented. What the women themselves, the employers and their male partners think about female employment has been shown. The particular difficulties facing women workers were also considered.

While the position of women in paid employment in the Caribbean appears to be a low and fragile one it should be pointed out that there are considerable variations between employment sectors and across the region. Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow found that Barbadian women are not channelled into low-income 'female' occupations in the same way that they are in other islands (1977:299). It also appears that, very gradually, some Governments are introducing legislation that at least accords women workers a similar degree of protection enjoyed by male workers. However progress is slow and at times of economic recession it appears that women workers are always the first and the hardest hit (Yelvington,1988a).

3.7 Caribbean Union Patterns

Union patterns are created when men and women form sexual unions together and so they are an important area for study in connection with gender relations. As R.T.Smith notes, the vast majority of Caribbean women spend some time in some form of union (1982:70). While there have been many studies which provide descriptions of the various union types few of these have considered the pattern of gender relations between the actors involved in such unions (Blake,1961:19, Moses,1977:143).

In earlier writings there was a deliberate attempt to put the apparently disorganised mating patterns into some sort of order. Rigid

serial patterns were sought and a rationality that would be acceptable to the morality of the Western reader was 'invented', (Henriques:1953, Simey: 1946, Smith,M.G.:1962, Smith,R.T.:1956). However, later authors have attempted to reflect the variety and dynamism of Caribbean union patterns without any form of moral censure (Brody:1981, Dann:1987, Freilich & Coser: 1972, WICP:1986).

3.7.1 The terminology used

Various authors have used different terms and definitions to describe what appears to be the same thing. Simey (1946) talked of three types of union, the 'Christian marriage', 'faithful concubinage' and the 'compassionate union'. Henriques (1953) added the 'keeper union'. M.G.Smith talked of 'marriage', 'consensual cohabitation' and 'extra-residential' mating. He pointed out that there was some confusion over the terminology for 'consensual cohabitation', which has been referred to as 'common-law marriage', 'concubinage', 'consort', 'non-legal union'. He adds that such a variety of terms illustrates the ambiguous position of consensual cohabitation (1962:248). This thesis argues that what it illustrates really is researchers' determination to create new labels rather than use those the actors themselves adopt.

Ashcraft (1968) follows earlier authors in a discussion of 'Christian marriage' and 'consensual cohabitation' but also introduces the term 'visiting'. This is a union whereby the male and female partners 'visit' each other in their respective homes or at other meeting places. Sexual intercourse usually takes place on such visits but not always. The visits may follow a regular pattern and be quite frequent or be somewhat haphazard. Hyman Rodman adopted the terms used by the Afro-Trinidadians he was studying, those of friending, living and married (1971:43).

While 'friending' is one term used by Caribbean people 'visiting' is the one used here. This is because during fieldwork when women were asked about how many men they were friendly with they would often respond with a number higher than one. If they were asked further about the nature of those relationships they would indicate that they only had a sexual relationship with one man at any one time; only one man came to their house to 'visit' them.

3.7.2 Why such variety of union patterns?

In his study of five Caribbean communities: the islands of Carriacou and Latante; the urban area of Grenville, in Grenada; Kingston, the urban area of Jamaica; and rural Jamaica; M.G.Smith found contrasting patterns of union types. In Carriacou, people either visited or married. In Latante and rural Jamaica they first visited, then cohabited and then married. In Grenville and Kingston all three forms existed alongside each other and did not follow a developmental pattern (1962:207). In Carriacou, married men continued to have extra-residential affairs; a wife was expected to accept such behaviour but cohabiting women were not. In Latante and rural Jamaica cohabitation was seen as a necessary prelude to marriage; men married to gain authority. In Grenville and Kingston each union type had an equal validity and so were in competition with each other (1962:104). Smith equated the rural, relatively stable populations with stable and structured mating patterns which follow a traditional progression. On the other hand, the chaotic and fluctuating urban populations had no such traditions and consequently their mating patterns were also in disarray.

Henriques argued that;

"Of over 100 women interviewed at the town pre-natal clinic 75%

wished to get married, but it appeared that the men were unwilling." (1953:86)

Despite Henriques' first statement about women desiring marriage he later demonstrates a contradiction. He notes;

"the feeling that a man may ill-treat her once he is her husband exists quite strongly."(1953:87)

and later;

"Many women say that they dislike the idea of marriage as it means being under the rule of a man."(1953:109)

Such contradictions may reflect genuine ambiguity in the thoughts of the women themselves, or an attempt on their part to convince the 'outside' researcher of their desire to lead a 'respectable' life.

In her study of Jamaican women, Blake found higher proportions of both men and women who said they preferred marriage to cohabitation. This was mostly due to the respectability they felt marriage conferred upon them, and due to the increased respect between partners (1961:129). She found that what prevented them from marrying until late in life (around the ages of 40 to 50) was the lack of capital necessary to provide an adequate wedding feast and to build a house (1961:139).

Blake's economic argument has been expanded by recent authors. Dirks and Kearns (1976) argue that the variety of union types is linked to economic opportunities. Where there are poor opportunities there is an increase in non-legal unions. Brody argues that the pattern of relationships found in Jamaica was influenced by the lack of employment, the movement of men in search for work, external migration of both men and women and the low status of women (1981:188). Henry and Wilson (1975) offer an explanation through class and state that marriage is not for the poor. They argue that the type of union a woman is willing to accept is dependent upon her class. Middle class women do not have visiting unions

whereas this is the most usual and also acceptable form of union for lower class women. However, it appears that men's union patterns are not determined by class; in fact the more money a man has the greater number of unions he can indulge in, whether he is married or not.

The pattern of unions appears to be more a question of acceptable gender relation patterns than of class or simply economics. This point is backed up by R.T.Smith who recently found that all forms of mating are practised by all classes (1988:112). Rodman offers a rich insight into the variety of union patterns and concentrates much more on the pattern of gender relations within them. He points out that the establishment of sexual relations occupies a considerable amount of the Afro-Trinidadian's time, and that to them it is inconceivable that unrelated men and women would spend any time together unless they were sexually involved (1971:49). He makes it clear that friending relationships are not only options for single people and that men may have simultaneous relationships. He feels that the instability of all union types is due to the low degree of trust between men and women (1971:66). Darn (1987) and Barrow (1986a) make the point that their male respondents stated that they liked a change, that it was exciting to initiate a new sexual relationship with another woman.

Hence it appears that the variety of union types has a variety of explanations. This thesis is not so much concerned with why particular union types exist but rather the nature of the gender relations within them.

3.7.3 The dynamism, flexibility and stability of unions

In trying to find some coherence in an apparently chaotic mating system early Caribbeanists wrote of a progression from the less stable

union of the visiting type to the more stable one of marriage (Braithwaite:1960, Clarke:1957, Cumper:1961, Davenport: 1961, Mintz: 1961). It was argued that as people, women in particular, progressed through their adult lives, so too their heterosexual behaviour changed. In their late teens and twenties, women were said to have a series of visiting unions, from which they may or may not have children. In their thirties they would then cohabit with one man with whom they had previously had a visiting union, and then marry this same man in their forties or fifties. This thesis terms this approach the 'stability progression'. Relatively little was said about any such progression for men, possibly because their sexual behaviour did not appear to follow such a linear pattern. Later Caribbeanists have criticised such functionalist approaches for being inaccurate and rigid.

Judith Blake points out that many have described the lower class Jamaican family as a highly unstable unit and sexual relationships are said to occur in a very casual manner. While she found this to be true she insists that what others have termed instability is in fact flexibility and dynamism which allows the actors to take the best from the situation (1961:19). Many of her male respondents accepted that women found a cohabiting union demoralising because they knew it could end at any time and so they tried to get as much from the men as possible (1961:123). Women often enter common-law unions reluctantly and because they need support. Often the man only wants a sexual partner, cook and laundress for which he provides temporary shelter and support (1961:144). A young girl having a sexual relationship prefers visiting unions to cohabitation and so remains in the marriage market (1961:151). For women with children the decision is not so easy. They need a new mate for support but that could mean more pregnancies and the union may not be

secure and lasting (1961:163). For these women the 'stability progression' has failed to materialise and she found little evidence to support the assumption that cohabiting unions will end in marriage (1961:174:).

In her study of St.Johns, Fog-Olwig found that most relationships were not based on practical considerations but rather on love and passion and so unions were easily dissolved because of the lack of economic ties (1985:76).

In Curacao, Marks found that cohabitation was not as stable as marriage (1976:9). He states that visiting unions are the most insecure for women with children for a variety of reasons: most men do not wish to provide for another man's children; the new partner may not be sure of his exclusive sexual rights to the woman as she may still have a sexual relationship with past partners to secure financial support for their children.(1976:48)

Rodman states that the three union types are not mutually exclusive and men can be visiting one woman, living with a second and married to a third (1971:48). Such non-mutual exclusivity is only possible for men. He contradicts authors who concentrate unduly on the instability of unions. Both visiting and cohabiting unions may be stable over a long period of time (1971:56)

It is clear, therefore, that there is considerable variety in the dynamism, flexibility and stability of each union type. What becomes clear is that such variety has very different consequences for men and women, and this will inevitably affect their perceptions about union patterns and the gender relations within them.

3.7.4 The legal status of unions

Marriage is the only legally recognised form of union in the Caribbean. It is often this legal recognition that Caribbean women cite as one of their main reasons for preferring marriage to a cohabiting union, especially in their later life. On the other hand, Rodman found that men were reluctant to marry because they could not afford the celebration, they wanted to test the women first and they did not want the legal responsibilities marriage brings (1971:67).

In a cohabiting union, the woman has no legal recourse for any support from the male partner if they separate, but she can sue him for support of their children. Sueing the putative father for the support of his children is an option open to women in visiting unions too. These legal rights are given under the so-called 'bastardy laws'. Very few women resort to this method because of social criticism accusing them of dragging the children's names through the courts. Also the maximum maintenance payment is pitifully low. It often amounts to only \$10-15 a week. In areas of high male unemployment many women see such a recourse to the law as futile.

A feature of Caribbean law is that it reflects the mores of past British society more than it does those of its own, a legacy of the colonial period. Rodman points out that in many islands the inheritance laws are at odds with Caribbean social organisation. The laws only recognise legitimate children, custom also recognises illegitimate children (1971:140). Jamaica and Guyana are now exceptions to this as many of their laws now make no distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children (Smith,1982:138)⁵.

3.7.5 The social status of unions

'Social status' means the social recognition, acceptance and expectations about the various union types. Such social status appears to set different standards for men and women. In Jamaica, Blake found that non-legal unions were not seen as more desirable than marriage (1961:178). Moses found that Montserratian women were expected to marry, raise children and be faithful to their husbands while he still enjoyed sexual freedom (1977:147). R.T.Smith states;

"The theme of male 'irresponsibility' in marriage and fatherhood is insistent and recurrent in modern West Indian social life." (1988:117)

Many mothers (parents) would prefer their young daughters to have visiting relationships rather than cohabit, and would only tolerate the latter if there was a good prospect of marriage, and if the man was from a good family. Ashcraft (1968) found that if children were born to a visiting union considerable social pressure may be brought to bear on a young father to recognise his child, although pressure for financial support was only used in cases where the man was deemed able to pay.

Justus found that the social attitudes about marriage as the ideal were supported by the church where illegitimacy was discouraged, and women with such children were not allowed to attend church until they had a stable union, legal or non legal (1981:44). Dirks found that in Rum Bay, U.S Virgin Islands, unmarried pregnant women were suspended from church membership for the duration of their pregnancy (1972:579).

Alongside the social belief that marriage is the ideal union there exist certain expectations of appropriate behaviour for men and women within any form of union. A woman in a cohabiting union does not have as much freedom as the man. If she did have a visiting union as well she would have to keep it very secret. This is not the case for men

(Rodman,1971:60). M.G.Smith found in Carriacou that married men could have other sexual affairs but women must remain loyal to their husband even if he was away overseas for long periods of time (1962:36). In Kingston, Jamaica he found that there was no rigid social sanction against men, whatever their union status;

"An extraresidential union is a publicly recognised relation between a man and a woman, under which the man has exclusive rights of sexual access to the woman...the man may have two or more extraresidential mates, he may also be married...The woman who mates extraresidentially must remain faithful to her partner as long as the relation endures." (1962:251)

What becomes clear therefore, is that there is no single pattern of social status of the various union types throughout the Caribbean but rather a considerable variation of what is considered acceptable.

3.7.6 Men's and women's attitudes towards union types

While this was a neglected area in original Caribbean work, recent authors have tried to fill in such gaps. Within the literature many conflicts concerning actors' own perceptions appear. This is to be expected if the genuine variety of attitudes is to be encapsulated.

Various authors have noted women's expectations of the three union types. Powell (1982) found that women in visiting unions liked the idea of a sexual union and enjoyed the companionship. Most of them wanted the relationship to develop into marriage. Cohabiting women felt some restrictions from the union but felt that they had gained an improved quality of life and emotional support. They too looked ahead to marriage. Married women felt that marriage was good for them although some said it had been a block, especially in social activities. Single women had mostly left their previous union for another man but were no longer with that man. They felt good about their status and enjoyed their

independence. The women seemed to be happy with the particular union they were in at any one point in time. This could be due to the flexibility and dynamism of the Caribbean union system. These women felt that if they needed to change their union status they were relatively free to do so. Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow found in their Barbados village study that because a conjugal union is not essential, either economically or for childrearing, considerations of compatability emerge as the main criterion in forming and maintaining relationships (1977:310).

Massiah (1982) found that;

"Among the younger single women and those in visiting unions the theme of independence looms large." (1982:86)

Moses (1977) in her study of Montserrat found that;

"Marriage is perceived by the majority of working class women in my study as undesirable because it restricts their alternatives. If they married they would have to be economically dependent and loyal to one man...it would be a dead-end for most young working class women." (1977:151)

In a similar way, McCormack and Draper working in Jamaica, found that for some women, a visiting union gave them considerable independence. Any financial support her boyfriend may give can be used for herself and her children and not for him (1977:153)

Blake found her respondents to be quite unrealistic about what they expected from their union. She found that married women had expected the best and were disappointed whereas cohabiting women had expected the worst and were grateful when things were not as bad as anticipated (1961:130). Brown argues that women who have had multiple partners are much more content within themselves and better adjusted to life circumstances than women who have had just one mate (1975:156). Brody (1981) found;

"Many women expressed a preference to remain unmarried, fearing that they would be trapped in a relationship that would eventually prove burdensome." (1981:194)

It would appear that while women seek the legal security marriage offers them they are not so eager to accept the restrictions such a union puts upon them; they have reservations about organisation of gender relations within marriage. The fact that many women choose to marry later in their lives may indicate that they have found a relationship which will not be too restrictive and that they also desire some legal security, particularly for their children. Once they have raised their children and earned social respect through their mothering role, it may be that they wish to add to that, the respectability of being married.

Men have different perceptions about unions but there is some overlap as far as marriage is concerned. Freilich found that most men preferred to have a cohabiting partner than to get married (1968:53). Rodman found that there was a reluctance to accept responsibilities on the part of the men;

"Friending, which involves the least responsibility, occurs most frequently. Legal marriage, which involves the most responsibility, occurs the least frequently." (1971:70)

Alongside men's reservations about marriage is their knowledge that social censure is not levelled at them in the way it is at women. They will be free to continue visiting relationships even when married. Fog Olwig found in St.Johns, that most men thought sexual affairs were acceptable as long as they did not interfere with the domestic relationship (1985:125). In contrast to this, Dann (1987) in his study of the Barbadian male found that in respect of an outside relationship;

"Those most opposed to the idea based their position on its inherent sinfulness. Then there were those who believed that a one to one relationship formed a part of the natural order...Others made the distinction between marital and non-marital relationships. If outside affairs were indeed extra-marital (as opposed to pre-marital) then they were wrong."(1987:79)

M.G.Smith found in Carriacou that men found marriage more permissive for them than cohabitation. In the latter type of union women assert their sexual rights and refuse to tolerate rivals; married women are expected to tolerate the other women and may even be asked for their advice on the matter (1962:32). Although, like women, men may choose to get married in later life, according to Blake as bachelors they do not suffer;

"Jamaican males undergo relatively less deprivation by not marrying than is true for bachelors in [other] social structures. In Jamaica, a man is deprived of neither regular sexual association nor feminine companionship by remaining single." (1961:142)

An opposite attitude was found by Dirks (1976) in that men over forty, who have no wife, are held in little respect; they are seen to have squandered their money when they had the chance to marry and are now left alone.

Despite acknowledging that most men have numerous visiting relationships simultaneously, or extra-residential affairs, few authors have investigated how the women feel about this infidelity. Freilich found that women found it upsetting when their husbands had a long-term affair because it might be a threat to the marriage (1968:54). Rodman has a different explanation and states;

"Ordinarily, she [the wife] is less concerned about his extra-marital sexual activities than about the amount of money this might be costing." (1971:61)

However Brody (1981) found for Jamaican women;

"Their matricentric orientation does not protect them from the pain and feelings of loss or rejection when their man takes a new partner." (1981:193)

3.7.7 Conclusion

It is clear, therefore, that in the Caribbean not only is there variety in the form of union types recognised, but also considerable variation in the stability and flexibility of these forms. There are

differences in the social status each is accorded, both within and between communities. There is also a considerable variation in the expectations and perceptions about the union types of the actors themselves. It is this rich variation that is a distinctive feature of Caribbean social organisation.

3.8 Caribbean Heterosexual Behaviour

As stated above 'heterosexual behaviour' includes all aspects relating to sexuality, biological reproduction and children. Initially certain aspects of heterosexual behaviour were neglected by Caribbean studies but during the late 1970s and 1980s this has altered. What follows is a review of the features relating to this topic as they are presented in the literature.

3.8.1 Definitions of sexuality

The parameters within which sexual behaviour is conducted is of central importance in a study of women's subordination and gender relations. In a consideration of definitions of sexuality it is necessary to investigate what is socially acceptable sexual behaviour, who is believed to have the greatest sexual needs and desires, what is defined as 'real' and pleasurable sex, and social attitudes towards homosexuality and bisexuality.

Throughout the literature there are discrepancies between descriptions of what Caribbean people perceive as the correct definitions of sexual behaviour. Brody found that her respondents in Jamaica;

"see the man as the central figure in a heterosexual relationship: the woman's needs and independence are clearly viewed as subordinate." (1981:111)

and that;

"men...felt that their mates should conform to a cultural expectation of sexual and reproductive submissiveness."(1981:177)

Powell notes that a woman's reputation is maintained through restrained and faithful sexual behaviour (1976:110). These were also the findings of other authors, (Dann,1987:38,44, Freilich and Coser, 1972:9). Dann found from his discussions relating to women's liberation, that the male respondents felt it eroded men's authority, and consequently the very essence of heterosexuality (1987:70). The centrality of the man in a dominant position in the definition of heterosexuality is also made clear by Kamugisha (1986:75). It is clear from the above that sexual behaviour is defined in male terms and that male control of any sexual relationship is central to the concept of heterosexuality.

However, in their studies of Barbados, Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow found an alternative pattern. They argue that both men and women see sex as pleasurable and desirable; it is essential to health and well-being. Men and women discuss sex together and they enjoy sexual banter. They argue that a man's reputation as a lover is not based on conquests of women but rather on his success in sexual performance, in being able to give the woman sexual pleasure. Sex and sensuality are equally valued in men and women (1977:318). It therefore appears that while men set the parameters for sexual behaviour there is also an emphasis on men being able to satisfy women sexually.

Another aspect of definitions of sexuality is the social beliefs about who is deemed to have greater sexual desires and needs. Barrow (1982, 1986b) found that her male respondents in Barbados felt that male sexual needs dictated that they had multiple sexual relationships simultaneously. Freilich (1968:148) and Freilich and Coser (1972:5) found

similar attitudes in Trinidad. In Barbados, Dann (1987) was given the following explanation for men having multiple sexual partners;

"Mostly it is the man who have the outside affair as he tends to be more carried away. Women tend to get to men more than men to women. He might see a nice lady, things might pass through his mind and he finds himself in a position to get close, and it happens naturally." (1987:83)

The stronger sexual urges of the Barbadian male have to be satisfied and often one woman is not enough. Blake found in Jamaica that women's infidelity was not justified in terms of sexual desire in the same way that men's was (1961:126). In most cases women's sexual desires are deemed to be either non-existent or of a lesser intensity and so controllable.

Concepts of what constitutes 'real' sex are an important factor in definitions of sexuality. Brody found that Jamaican men said that full sexual intercourse was real sex and that while they liked fellatio they felt cumilingus gave the women power over them as their juices were dangerous (1981:50). Hence a woman's sexual pleasure is equated with danger to the man and a loss of his power.

MacCormack and Draper found some myths bound up with sexuality and women's fear of pregnancy. Female respondents said that they had heard that they were not likely to become pregnant if intercourse were rapid, that if both enjoyed sex pregnancy would occur, and a simultaneous orgasm was more likely to result in pregnancy (1987:157). It appears then that many women forgo expectations of their own sexual pleasure due to fears about becoming pregnant, while the men still benefit.

Another feature of definitions of sexuality is the acceptance or inacceptance of homosexuality and bisexuality. Very little work has been carried out to specifically investigate homosexuality and bisexuality in the Caribbean. There are no references to bisexuality and homosexuality

has only been rarely mentioned.

M.G.Smith (1962), in his study of Carriacou, found that in the absence of male partners from the island the women would turn to each other for sexual satisfaction. He states that lesbianism was a preferred option to infidelity with other men on the island. However, he failed to investigate this phenomena further. In contrast to this, in Tortola, Dirks found that unrelated women were not expected to form close friendships. Women who did would be subject to negative sanctions as their friendships would be interpreted as homosexual and men kept a careful watch on their wives (1972:71).

Dann specifically asked his male respondents about their attitudes towards homosexuality along with the topic of women's liberation. He found the men to be more tolerant of women's liberation than homosexuality. The few that had a more tolerant attitude had better jobs and more sexual experience; religious men were the least tolerant (1987:60). He found that some found lesbianism less distasteful or difficult to understand than male homosexuality, as they themselves found women attractive, they could understand why women found other women attractive too (1987:64).

In the Caribbean, sexuality is heterosexual. Male-centric forms of behaviour are seen as the norm and sexual pleasure is defined in terms of what is pleasurable for the man who is also believed to have the strongest sexual needs. There is a distinct lack of tolerance towards alternative or complementary definitions of sexuality.

3.8.2 Masculinity and femininity in the Caribbean

In discussions about which factors contribute to the social acceptance of what is man and womanhood, the overall importance of having

children is most clear. MacCormack and Draper found that in Jamaica sexuality is strongly linked with desiring children. Having children establishes self-identity, it is an expression of sexual potency and social power (1987:143). However, there is an important distinction in that femininity is defined through fertility and raising children, masculinity through impregnation rather than any childcare (Change:n.d.). Again in Jamaica, Brody found that for a man, children are a way to publicly state his potency and power. To comment positively about a man's fertility is flattery; negative comments are insults (1981:60,147). Other authors have found that manhood is also bound up with sexual ability, in particular the ability to sexually satisfy the woman; Freilich (1968), Smith (1988), and Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow (1977), found this to be true in Trinidad, Jamaica and Guyana, and Barbados respectively.

There are some indications that the importance of having many children with numerous women as proof of manhood is decreasing. Brody found that more men were beginning to use contraception and that sexual freedom was becoming more important than reproductive prowess as a way of establishing self-esteem (1981:113). Similarly in Barbados, Dann found;

"A different type of Barbadian male began to emerge, an alternative to the traditional stereotype. Instead of a young carefree individual engaged in multiple relationships resulting in numerous pregnancies, one discovered a more mature individual who was prepared to accept his family responsibilities." (1987:95)

Masculinity has to be proved to one's peer group. For men, male solidarity revolves around the rum shop where the consumption of alcohol, the playing of cards and dominoes, and boasting of sexual exploits serve to mutually reinforce the male egos (Dirks,1972:573, Smith,1988: 137, Wilson,1971). Powell notes that men's self respect depends on authoritative and self-assertive behaviour in public; anyone challenging them will receive an aggressive response (1976:109).

Hence manhood in parts of the Caribbean is now earned less through the siring of many offspring and more through multiple sexual relationships. Manhood is conferred by the male peer group the focal point of which is the rum shop where the male-only activities are carried out allowing men the chance to demonstrate their masculinity.

For Caribbean women the concept of femininity is strongly bound up with motherhood. Powell (1976, 1982) found that it was seen as very important that women have children and that motherhood was the only source of status for many women. Brody claims that with few economic roles open to women the importance of having children and being a good mother increases. He found that for working class women the culture of 'motherhood' was very strong and the way to express self-determination and strength (1981:223). Motherhood, and hence womanhood, is not determined only by bearing children oneself but by mothering children. Powell states that motherhood is the main source of feminine identity and a woman who does not have her own children must parent those of another (1986:122). Becoming a mother is said to be the most important thing that a woman can achieve (Henriques, 1953:88, Saint Victor, 1986:86, Sutton et al, 1975:593, 594)

MacCormack and Draper found young women to be more apprehensive about being infertile, and so not becoming complete women, than about becoming pregnant at an early age (1987:151). This fear was quite well founded as Marks found that childless women were liable to be called a 'mule' or 'masculine women'; God was said to have punished them with infertility (1975:229).

In addition to the central concept of motherhood, femininity has been achieved when other criteria are met. Dirks found that social expectations about a woman's behaviour were very different for those of

men. Women should be passive and enduring; their social relationships should be centred on the household and local church (1976:579). While this is an ideal it appears that increasingly Caribbean women are defining for themselves what their social relationships and activities should involve. However, the reproductive ability of a woman remains an important symbol of her femininity.

3.8.3 The sexual double standard

A feature of heterosexual behaviour in the Caribbean is the marked sexual double standard which exists. It appears that this double standard is institutionalised with similar patterns of behaviour found across the region. In all cases the system operates in the favour of men. In Jamaica, Brody found that very few men had one sexual partner. Even those in a residential union had a girlfriend they visited. Those in visiting unions visited at least two and over 25% of the men said they were sexually involved with three or more women (1981:204).

Freilich and Coser (1972) found that in Trinidad the sexual double standard had become known as the 'sex-fame game'. Under this system men gained fame through numerous sexual relationships and through having children with many women. They were awarded their fame through the public broadcasting of these exploits. Women wished to keep their sexual relationships a secret to avoid 'shame'. In this system the wishes of men and women are in direct opposition and the women lose as a man has no incentive to keep any sexual relationship a secret. Moses found in Montserrat that while a married woman had to remain faithful to her husband, he would still enjoy the sexual double standards allowed by society (1977:504). Dann (1987), Marks (1975), Rodman (1971) and Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow (1977) found similar patterns in Barbados, Curacao,

Trinidad and Barbados respectively.

Within the framework of this sexual double standard the way for the woman who suffers the infidelity to earn respect from the community, and ironically her male partner, is for her to continue as though nothing is happening (Henry and Wilson:1975), and to remain 'cool'. The angry and upset wife drives her husband away and loses community respect. If she accosts the husband's lover she loses even more prestige (Freilich and Coser, 1972:14).

Hence the sexual double standard works to condone men's freedom of sexual access to numerous women, and at the same time denies these women any form of criticism or sanction against such behaviour. Freilich and Coser again;

"The sex-fame game is rigged in favour of the males...it is positively functional for the male members of the community since it allows them the maximum of sexual gratification with a minimum of responsibility...The women are basically but the objects, or counters in a game in which the males are the sole autonomous players."(1972:17)

3.8.4 Attitudes to sex and members of the opposite gender

There is relatively little investigation into how men and women feel about sex and members of the opposite gender. In her work with Barbadian men, Barrow (1986) found that men made a clear distinction between women who were mothers and sisters and those who were potential sexual partners. The men feared women developing and improving their position as it was a threat to their own power. Such women were to be watched and not trusted. They tended to see women as scheming and full of tricks to get what they wanted from men. However, Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow found that men expected women to know how to represent and look after themselves (1977:312). Dann asked his male respondents about what they saw as the ideal qualities they wanted from a woman. Trustworthiness

was top of the list, followed by honesty and dependability (1987:73).

For both men and women sexual intercourse is considered to be normal and an expected activity. It is seen as essential to natural vitality and should not be refrained from as illness will result (Brody, 1981:59, MacCormack and Draper, 1987:155, Smith, 1988:137)

Dann found that men's attitude to their early sexual encounters was one of experimentation and devoid of emotion. They saw sex as fun and had little interest in how the women felt (1987:39). Most mentions of women's ideas about sex or men are in negative terms. Brody found women saw men as weaklings and undeserving of their powerful positions. He found that 70% of his respondents felt negatively about men (1981:192). Such negative feelings about men and husbands are also recorded by Freilich (1968:53), Jackson (1982:40) and Sutton and Makiesky-Barrow (1977:594).

In her work with Jamaican women, Blake asked them why they became sexually involved when they did. Most said that 'it just happened' or 'they didn't think'. Also a sizeable number of women seemed to have been victims of male aggression (1961:52). Most women said that they had been very ignorant in sexual matters and many did not connect intercourse with pregnancy until they became pregnant (1961:52)

It appears that for many women their initial sexual experience is an unpleasant and negative experience (Blake:1961, Brody:1981, Roberts: 1975, Roberts and Sinclair:1978) but that as they mature and learn more they too come to enjoy good sexual relationships and may even exercise a choice of partner on criteria of his having or lacking sexual ability.

3.8.5 Contraception and Abortion

Roberts and Sinclair (1978) found little evidence of contraceptive use and no evidence at all of men using it. Brody found that the women

who were seeking contraceptive advice from clinics usually had already had several children but that they were not very effective in their use of the methods they were offered (1981:95). However, he did find a number of men using contraception because they wanted to avoid the economic burden of more children, and they wanted sexual freedom without any responsibilities (1981:113). In the same study it was found that women were reluctant to use mechanical methods of contraception as upon discovery their mates would accuse them of sexual infidelity and promiscuity (1981:43). However it appears that there is a growing realisation about men's control over women's fertility as one of Brody's respondents made clear;

"The main thing that holds women down in Jamaica is that the men don't give a chance to get teachment about birth control. Man just wants to keep a woman down in the home all the time." (1981:200)

While MacCormack and Draper found contraceptive use to be more common in Jamaica than in the past there was still much concern about methods that interrupted a woman's natural menstruation pattern. They also found that the condom was not trusted as a method because of fears that they came off internally and caused sterility (1987:158). Dann found that most of his respondents had heard of contraception but that there was a variety of attitudes towards its use. Despite the mostly negative attitudes towards contraception he noted that as men settled down with a partner they were more likely to use it (1987:130).

It appears then that knowledge and acceptance of the use of contraception has increased and this is most likely to be due to the growing number of family planning clinics and education programmes. Despite this there remain some areas of poor understanding of the principles involved and still a distinct lack of responsibility taken by the men.

In all Caribbean countries abortion is illegal although in some islands it is permissible if the physical health of the mother or the unborn child is in grave danger. Due to this, and due to the importance of having children in terms of social respect, it is an area very rarely discussed. Brody found it difficult to get women to discuss it (1981:42) and that when they did it was in negative terms with most women stressing the dangers of having one (1981:51). However, it does take place, usually with women resorting to the use of herbal abortifacants or primitive mechanical means. The medical complications associated with these primitive methods are sometimes severe. Massiah notes that in Barbados complications from abortions were the second and third highest cause of admissions to hospital in 1976 and 1975 respectively (1978:13). It is clear therefore, that abortion takes place quite often and hence is an area which needs much more investigation, not least because of the issues it raises connected with gender relations.

3.8.6 Beginning sexual behaviour and sex education

Cohen (1955) found that in Jamaica, both boys and girls had their first sexual experience when they were about 14 years old. Dann (1987) found that in Barbados the age range for sexual experience was 15-19 years old. This seems to be the case across the Caribbean region.

Brody found that only 9.2% of the men interviewed had received any positive instruction about sex from their mother or father (1981:140). Dann also found;

"In practice the acquisition of sexual information had been relocated to the outer zone of the street, rum shop and workplace....Several admitted that sex education was absent from the home." (1987:32)

In Curacao, Marks found that boys received detailed and sexually stimulating information from their friends (1975:251). Boys were afforded considerable freedom of movement with little restriction on what they did with that freedom. Brody found parents, especially mothers, treated the early sexual adventures of their sons with amusement, even encouragement (1981:140). He also found that in sharp contrast to the discipline imposed on daughters, women in fatherless homes were very permissive with their sons (1981:258). Such permissive attitudes were also found by Blake (1961:68) and Marks (1975:251)

Girls received little or no sexual education (Henry and Wilson: 1975). However, they lacked the alternative sources of information available to the boys and were generally rather naive about all aspects of sexual development and behaviour. Roberts and Sinclair (1978) found women had very little knowledge about menstruation and held strong beliefs in old taboos relating to acceptable behaviour at the time of their menstruation. Brody found a similar lack of knowledge and that very few women had reacted positively to their first menstruation, many felt afraid, disgusted or ill (1981:126). MacCormack and Draper made similar findings (1987:149). In contrast to the freedom awarded to boys, girls' behaviour was closely controlled. Brody found that girls would be strongly disciplined if they displayed sexual interest, looked at boys or asked too many questions (1981:135). Justus (1981:439) and Marks (1975:253) found similar responses on the part of guardians or parents.

It is clear, therefore, that by the age of puberty the worlds of boys and girls differ markedly and a segregated pattern of behaviour and social expectation is established.

3.8.7 Attitudes towards children

The importance of having children in terms of self-identity and social status for both men and women has been discussed above; this section considers the specific ideas men and women have about children.

While there is evidence that men wanting to have as many children with as many women as possible is now less common, there is still the belief that women should "make a baby for a man" when he wishes it (Brody,1981:117). Dann found that men now wanted children for reasons other than demonstrations of masculinity. They saw children as a vital ingredient to family life and they completed a relationship (1987:145). He also found that not having children was seen as morally wrong, "contrary to divine law" (1987:144), that having children was "an obligation and a duty" (1987:145); people who decided not to have children for career purposes, or because "it might keep them back", or simply because they did not want to be seen pregnant, were described as "selfish" (1987:146).

Marks found that in Curacao, men and women saw children as an important source and focus of affection. They proved fertility and virility (1975:242).

While men in general had positive attitudes towards children they were very wary of being tricked into caring for a child they had not fathered. Rodman notes;

"The man who supports a child that is not or may not be his own is ridiculed, and the appearance of the child is carefully checked to see whether or not he looks like the father." (1971:52)

Women tended to give many reasons for having children. A woman may decide to have a child with a man in an attempt to keep him as her partner (Change,n.d.), but this may lead her into a cycle of dependency and further pregnancies as one mate after another deserts her (Brody,

1981:51, Dam,1987:151).

Powell (1982) found that women wanted children for support, for emotional satisfaction, and for the companionship and affection that men failed to give them. Brody's respondents said that children proved to be valuable companions in older age (1981:118). Rodman found that children were valued for their economic utility, the fact that they helped around the house, ran messages and carried water and wood when necessary (1971:161).

There is some contradiction in the literature about preferences for boys or girls. Powell (1982) found that both boys and girls were desired. Brody found that there was a preference for girls as they were more likely to look after elderly mothers (1981:164). Rodman also found a slight preference for daughters as they were expected to be more concerned about their parent's welfare (1971:86). Alternatively, Marks states that there was a preference for the first child to be a son (1975:226). Dam found that some men wanted to continue reproducing until they had had a son (1987:90).

Despite such discrepancies, which is to be expected in cases of personal choice, it is clear that in general, both men and women share positive attitudes to having children. For women the emotional and affectionate value of children is of prime importance.

3.8.8 Responsibilities of childcare

Having found that both men and women view biological parenthood in favourable terms it is now important to find out to what extent that is translated into practical parenthood.

A common finding in the Caribbean is that although men want to father children they rarely want to care for them. Brody found that many

young girls had friends whose boyfriends had urged them to get pregnant and then abandoned them. In the words of one respondent;

"Jamaican man just want to give woman a lot of babies and just run off and leave them." (1981:226)

Barrow found that parenting is seen as women's work. On proving his virility the man moves on; the woman has another child and has to find another means of support (1986b:53). This paternal evasion of responsibilities is also noted by (Clarke:1957, Rodman:1971, M.G.Smith:1962). Dann found that men felt providing money was adequate fatherhood (1987:17). On the contrary, Shorey-Bran found that 70% of cases heard in the Jamaican family court relate to problems with child support from fathers (1986:70).

Most women, therefore, have to accept the full responsibility for their children. They use their networks to find childcare while they attempt to find economic support (Massiah,1982:81, Saint Victor,1986:84).

Despite the difficulties they face, both McKenzie (1982:x) and Sutton et al (1975:593) make the point that through caring for their children women get the chance to exercise their independence, responsibility, decision-making autonomy and control over their own lives and those of others. They are able to demonstrate their capabilities and earn considerable respect for such achievements.

3.8.9 Social censure and control

We have seen that Caribbean heterosexual behaviour is organised in a way that strongly favours men over women, that women play a subordinate role and that the pattern of gender relations is organised to male advantage. It is therefore necessary to review the little research that has been done which indicates how such patriarchal gender relations are

maintained.

Cohen (1955) states that the most frequently employed and effective externalised mechanism of social control within the community is gossip. It appears that Caribbean people have a great fear of being talked about. In densely populated villages and with houses open to the streets it is difficult to conduct one's affairs in private. In most villages there is always someone observing what is going on, ready to pass on the information. This fear of being watched and discussed, and possibly publicly ridiculed, makes Caribbean people attempt to keep their behaviour within certain socially defined parameters. Gossip is particularly successful in controlling women's behaviour as there is considerably more condemnation of their 'wrong' behaviour than there is of men's. 'Shameless' (Powell,1976:110) and 'worthless' (Dann,1987:85) are some of the milder terms used against women who do not appear to be following the sexual double standard where women remain loyal to one man. Men on the other hand are not criticised for their promiscuous behaviour, but they will be ridiculed if their partner appears to be 'cuckolding' them.

Social censure and gossip may be used against men who fail to acknowledge and support their children, however it is rarely successful. If the father has the slightest doubt that the child is not his he will disown it and no amount of gossip will change his mind (Rodman,1971:79). If the mother takes him to court it is she who will then be socially censured and become the focus of negative gossip.

A woman will also be ridiculed if she makes a fuss about her partner's infidelity. Only by acting as though nothing were happening can she earn respect.

While gossip acts as an effective control mostly against women, men

are given public places in which to boast of the very exploits that women are criticised for. The rum shop is the most important place (Brana-Shute:1976, Dirks:1972, Smith,1988:116,137, Wilson:1971). Women are effectively excluded from these male places until they are older, married and past childbearing age and even then their presence is not tolerated for long.

3.8.10 Violence relating to sexuality

This is a relatively unresearched area of Caribbean social organisation. Statistics recording violent events relating to heterosexual behaviour are sketchy and do not reflect the actual instances of sexual aggression. Change (n.d.) argue that domestic violence crosses all classes and that verbal violence seems to be a pastime for men. Kamugisha states that crimes of violence against women, rape, incest, assault and sexual harrassment are prevalent in the region. She notes that in the 1970s the number of rapes actually reported increased in Trinidad and Tobago (1986:74). After the attack itself Caribbean women generally face further difficulties if the case comes to court. In some Caribbean courts a woman who does not respect the sexual double standard is assumed to deserve what she gets; often it is the sexual reputation of the women which is on trial (1986:75).

It appears that rape is a fairly common occurrence for young girls entering their sexual lives. Brody (1981) found that for 17% of young girls their first sexual experience had been a rape. Roberts and Sinclair (1978) made similar discoveries. MacCormack and Draper (1987) found that in Jamaica, about the same proportion of women said they first had sex for love as said they were raped. It would appear therefore that the problem is a major one.

Evidence of incest is very hard to find and may only come to light through rumour. Kamugisha states that fathers and step-fathers are the most common perpetrators and that it may begin at a very early age (1986: 77).

Domestic violence is more frequently discussed but statistics are again scarce. The police and other professionals view it as a problem of individual families rather than a social one (Kamugisha, 1986:76). Jackson found that abuse of the woman was a common source of discord in residential unions (1982:47). Powell found that domestic violence was relatively common as a means of men asserting their authority over women (1976:110). A commonly stated reason for men beating their partners is their infidelity, proved or suspected (Freilich and Coser, 1972:8). Dann found that Barbadian men felt that women who had more than one partner were running the risk of getting beaten up (1987:86). Many of the life histories provided by Sistren (1986) tell of male violence from fathers and partners.

Evidently, men will not tolerate heterosexual behaviour from women similar to that which they enjoy. Many resort to physical violence to demonstrate the fact. Whether violence against women increases with their economic and personal development is an area that needs to be investigated.

3.8.11 Conclusion

While no study has investigated all aspects of Caribbean heterosexual behaviour and the interlinkages between them, there has evidently been much more attention paid to various components of heterosexual behaviour by recent studies (Barrow:1986, Brody:1981, Dann:1987, MacCormack and Draper:1987). The definitions of sexuality

favour men and have established the public acceptance/tolerance of the sexual double standard. Sexual freedom and the siring of children determines masculinity whereas femininity is defined through the bearing of, and caring for, children. Men see women as untrustworthy and are selfish about their sexual satisfaction; women tend to hold men in contempt. Caribbean children learn sexual behaviour through experimentation and often at an early age. This early experimentation often leads to early pregnancies and many women remain quite ignorant about their own biology and ways of controlling their fertility. Children are greatly favoured although the practical matters of raising them are usually left to the mothers, with most men doing little to help. The heterosexual behaviour of adults is subject to social censure and some degree of control, although most negative censure and any control is usually directed at the women. Men use violence to maintain the advantage conferred upon them by the social construction of heterosexual behaviour

3.9 General Conclusion

This chapter has considered the nature of the four areas of social organisation which were identified in Chapter II. It has presented the findings from the Caribbean literature, having explained why some areas have received more attention than others.

The Caribbean household was identified as a highly dynamic and complex social area. The importance of differentiating the household from the family was made clear. Theories about the development of the Caribbean household, attempts at its classification, and the concept of household head, were all presented and criticised. Household membership was shown to be dynamic and complex, with people moving between

households, either temporarily or permanently. The gender division of household labour and decision-making were shown to be organised in ways that favoured male household members, particularly husbands. The importance of household networks as sources of support, both financially and emotionally, for women was demonstrated.

Women were found to be concentrated in particular types of employment, largely determined by their educational level. Despite the difficulties women want to work, not only for the financial rewards but for their self-esteem and sense of independence. Employers on the whole tend to see women as a docile and cheap workforce. In the workplace women face discrimination, sexual harassment and problems in finding adequate childcare. Men were shown to have a mixture of attitudes about women's employment, some encouraged it, others feared it. There were also opposing findings about the effect women's employment had on their position in the household, some research found it to have an effect, others found it had no effect at all if they were sharing their household with their partner.

Union patterns were found to be varied and dynamic, both within communities and throughout the region. The 'stability progression' where women move through union patterns of a less stable nature to the most stable, was criticised. Despite the rich variety of union types the legal systems of the region only recognise marriage as a legal union. In contrast, a whole range of union types are given social recognition, but the nature of such recognition varied within and between islands. Relatively little is known about what men and women think about the unions they are involved in. It would appear that because of the variety of socially acceptable union types people can move out of a union that no longer suits them relatively freely, with the exception of marriage. Men

have the greatest freedom because they can be involved in more than one type of union at any one time.

Heterosexual behaviour was the term used to cover aspects of behaviour linked to sexuality and biological reproduction. Sexuality was found to be defined in male terms and to be heterosexual. Masculinity was shown to be defined through male heterosexual relationships and the fathering of many children. For women, femininity is defined through the mothering and raising of many children. Men were seen to enjoy the benefits of a strong sexual double standard which allowed them access to women and complete sexual freedom but restricted the women to a loyal relationship with just one man. Men generally saw women who were potential partners as devious and not to be trusted. Women saw men as conceited and domineering, and undeserving of their superior positions. Most men and women began sexual activity at a young age. Control of fertility was very much seen as a woman's problem with very few men doing anything about using contraception. Women were very negative about abortion and it is illegal throughout the region. While men want to father children they do not want the responsibilities that go with having children; childcare falls firmly on the shoulders of women. The nature of heterosexual behaviour was shown to be maintained through social censure, gossip and violence against women.

We have seen how the areas of social organisation are manifest in the Caribbean, and in the main they appear to be constructed to the advantage of men and the disadvantage of women. This thesis will now use the theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter II in combination with the areas of social organisation described above to investigate the nature of gender relations in Montserrat. First, let us consider Montserrat.

CHAPTER IV
MONTSERRAT AND ELSEKA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present information about the island of Montserrat and the study village of Elseka. After presenting a brief and general background to Montserrat the chapter continues in the form of three distinct sections. The first will give an outline of the fieldwork methods used to gather the data (more detailed discussion is presented in Appendix I). The problems that arose during the fieldwork will also be discussed. In the second section I will describe how I lived and carried out my research in Elseka, including some of the difficulties I had to overcome. The third and final section will then present the profiles of the 100 employed women interviewed. Thumb-nail sketches of the people I interviewed in the village will also be given.

4.2 Montserrat: The Emerald Isle

Montserrat was re-named¹ by Christopher Columbus, the first European to sight the island in 1493. It was called Montserrat because the mountain silhouette reminded him of the mountain range outside Barcelona, on which the Monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat stands². It was first settled, in 1632, by Irish catholics fleeing religious persecution in Virginia, North America and the island of St.Kitts, hence the name of 'The Emerald Isle'. The Irish influence is still evident in some of the place names; Cork Hill, Riley's, and Brades, and also in the surnames of Montserratians, taken from the slave plantation owners; O'Garro, Irish, and Galloway. During the colonial wars between the French and the British the island changed hands three times but was never strongly influenced by the French. It became a British colony in 1783.

Montserrat is one of the smallest islands in the Leeward Island chain with an area of 32 miles. It measures 11 miles by seven at its widest point but reaches a height of 3,000 feet. It is a volcanic island with three distinct mountain groups: the Silver Hills in the north; the Central Hills in the centre of the island; and the Soufriere Hills in the south. It is surrounded by the Caribbean Sea, but the black or grey sand beaches are only found on the west coast as the east coast is mainly high cliffs³. The volcanoes have not erupted for many years although there are two large, active soufrieres, Galway's and Gages, which produce sulphurous deposits and gases. To the south and east vegetation is lush, green and tropical with some areas of virgin rainforest still visible. The north of the island has a more Mediterranean appearance due to deforestation for charcoal and overgrazing by the many wild goats that now live there.

The island is divided into three parishes, St. George's, St. Peter's and St. Anthony's, the largest. The only town and capital, Plymouth, is in St. Anthony's and lies at the foot of the Soufriere Hills on the sheltered west coast. It is home for about 13% of the island's 11,500 population. Other Montserratians live in villages dotted around the island, mostly on the lower slopes of the mountains. Villages are usually sited where the sugar, lime and cotton plantations were at the time of slavery.

The population is ethnically homogeneous having descended from the African slave population. There is a growing expatriate population from the United States and Canada. They have built homes in areas set aside for them; one group of areas is on the west coast, north of Plymouth; Olveston, Old Towne and Foxes Bay; another area is on the east coast, near the airstrip; Spanish Pointe. These people are usually retired and they lead quite separate lives from the Montserratians, although they

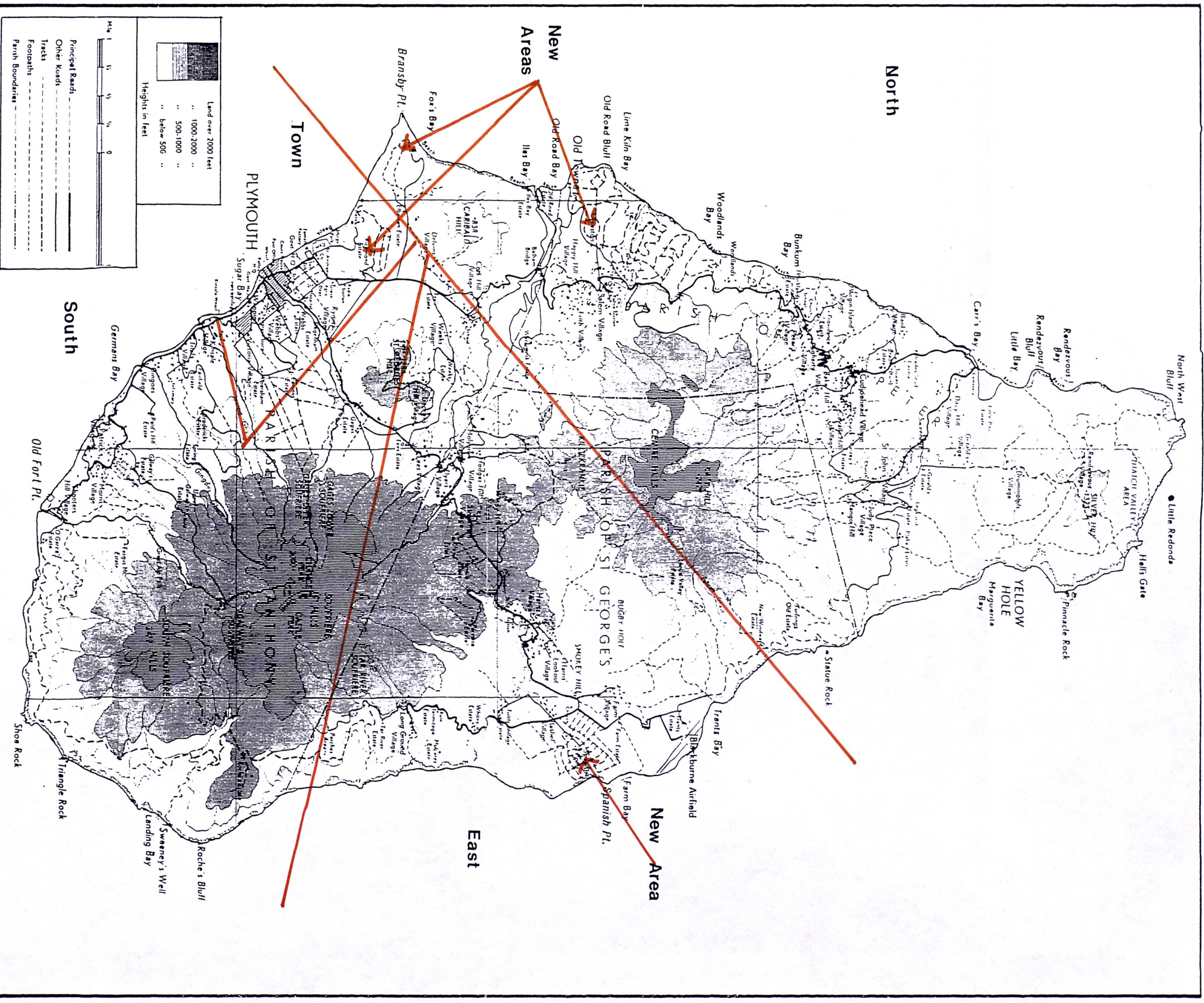
employ Montserratians as domestics, gardeners and for swimming pool maintenance. Increasingly, professional Montserratians are applying for and gaining mortgages to buy land and build houses in the newly developed areas of; Olveston, Old Towne, and Foxes Bay on the west coast; and in Richmond Hill and Amersham, nearer Plymouth.

Politically the island is a British Crown Colony and it has a Governor appointed by the British Crown. Montserratians elect their own Executive and Legislative councils, the leader of which is the Chief Minister. The island is divided into seven constituencies and there are elections once every five years or less. While I was on the island, from October 1986 until August 1987, the People's Liberation Movement was in power with five of the seven seats. There was one woman MP, the Minister for Health and Education.

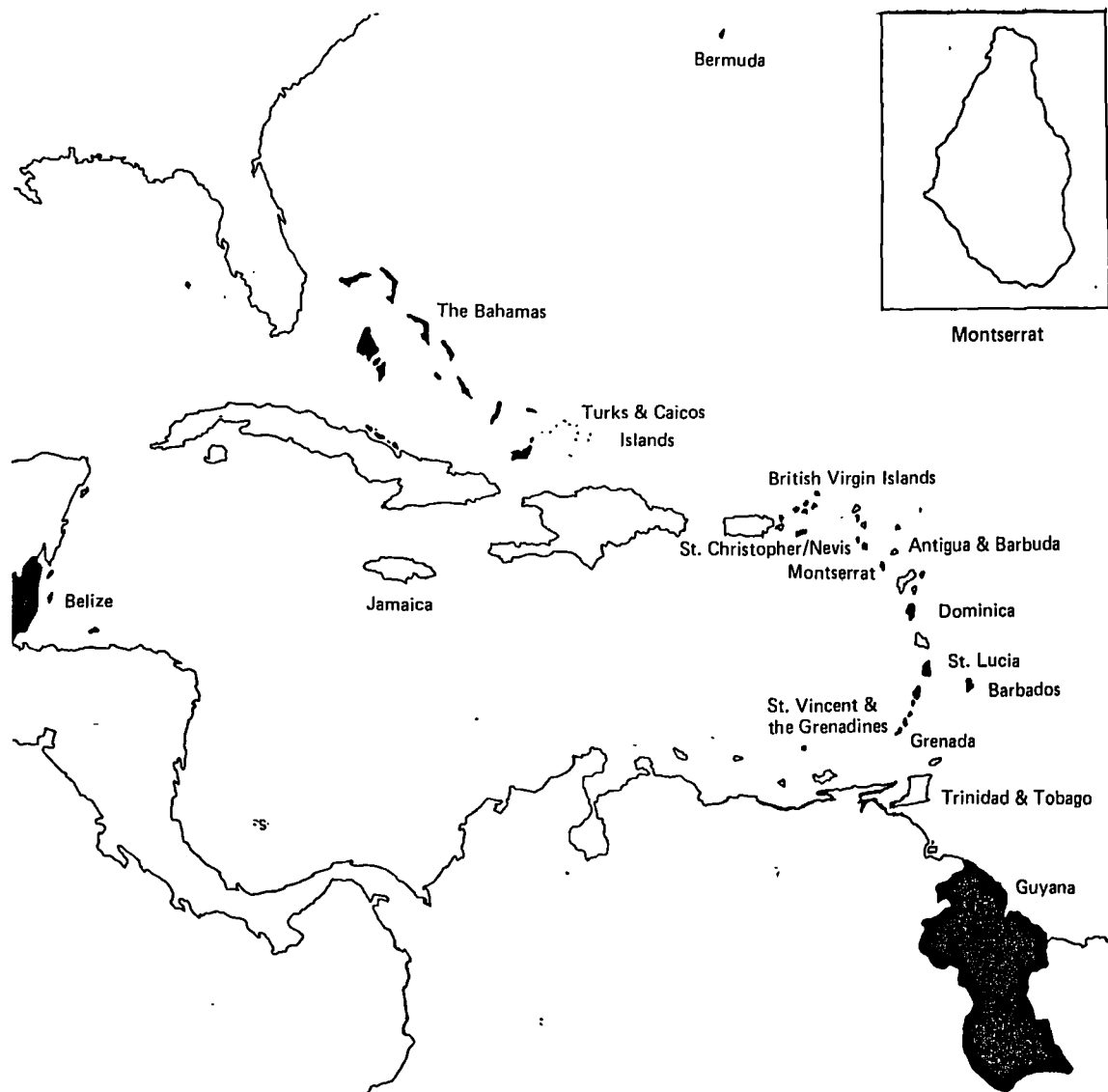
Map 4.1 shows the position of Montserrat within the Caribbean. (The darkened islands shown are those areas which were included in the Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, 1980-1981.) Map 4.2 shows the island of Montserrat in greater detail. The newly developed areas, the north, east, and south areas referred to in table 4.2 are indicated.

The four photographs are included to give some indication of how Montserrat appears (photographs of Elseka are not included to protect the villagers' anonymity). Photograph 4.1 shows the Central Hills and the Silver Hills, in the far distance, from Chance's Peak, the highest point in the Soufriere Hills (3,000 feet). Photograph 4.2 shows the west coast of the island from a hill above the most northern beach, Rendezvous. Photographs 4.3 and 4.4 show the 'ghaut' cut by the outflow of hot water from the island's main soufriere, Galway's, and a view across Foxes Bay Beach, towards Old Towne, one of the newly developed areas.

developed areas



Map 4.1 The situation of Montserrat within the Caribbean region



Photograph 4.1 View of the Central and Silver Hills from Chance's Peak, Soufriere Hills



Photograph 4.2 View of the west coast from hill above most northerly beach, Rendezvous



Photograph 4.3
View of 'ghaut'
from Galway's Soufriere



Photograph 4.4
View of Old Towne
from Foxes Bay Beach



4.3 Methods and difficulties

This section will not go into great detail about the specific ways in which the fieldwork data was collected as this is presented in Appendix I. Here I will just give an overview of the methods used by way of an introduction to the material presented in the following four empirical chapters. However, the difficulties that arose while doing the research will be discussed.

It is very important that the anonymity of the people who gave interviews is preserved. The employed women have all been assigned an interview number from one to 100. In most cases I did not know their names so I could assure them of confidentiality. This promise has been respected throughout the research. The names of the places where these women worked have been changed. The names of the village interviewees are also fictional. I tried to make them typical of the type of Montserratian names but did not use any names of people I knew. The village name itself is fictional. Montserrat is a very small island and, as we will see in Chapter VIII, privacy is carefully guarded. I respected the privacy of the village interviewees at all times.

I felt that it was important that I was willing to give as much information about myself as I expected the women to give me⁴. At the beginning of each interview I explained what the interview would be about, how it would be used and why I was doing the research. I made it clear to the women that they could ask me any questions they wanted to, either about the project or about myself. I also made it clear that if there was any part of the interview that they did not wish to answer we would go straight onto the next question or section. Some of the women asked questions about both the project and about myself and I was lucky

enough to develop friendships with many of the women I interviewed. Very few women declined to answer single questions and none of them refused to discuss whole areas. Their openness and willingness to take me into their confidence was extremely flattering and for this I shall always be in their debt.

4.3.1 Methods

This section considers six aspects of the methods I used to collect the data.

I decided to record all the interviews on cassette-tapes and then transcribe them. There were various reasons for using tapes. The main one was that it would allow me to develop a rapport with the interviewee as the interview progressed, through eye-contact and encouraging comments. I would not have my face buried in a note-book as soon as they answered a question. Building a rapport with the interviewees was very important because of the personal nature of much of the questioning. Recording the interviews allowed me to keep what the women said in the vernacular; I wanted to allow the women to say what they wanted to say in their own words. The time factor was also important, especially in the case of the employed women. Interviews were done in work time and so I had to keep the interviews as short as possible, without losing any of the quality of the material collected; using a tape-recorder saved a lot of time. The final reason for taping interviews was that it had the effect of making the interviewees feel important, that it was a 'real' interview. While some were a little worried about how they sounded on tape (and I always let them listen to their interview if they wished to) most were quite proud to have been selected for something that seemed important. After

the initial few questions interviewees seemed to forget about the tape-recorder and the interviews became more like relaxed conversations.

In order to gather information that would provide a context for the project I carried out numerous 'background' interviews. These were also taped and each schedule was tailored according to what I wanted to know. The list of who was interviewed in which capacity is recorded in Appendix I. I usually approached people in person or via the telephone, told them about the research and what I wanted to know, and then asked if they would be willing to talk to me. If they agreed we decided upon a date for the interview. This initial approach allowed me to prepare them for the kind of questions I would be asking so they could arrange to have any specialised information available. It also enabled me to make sure I would be talking to the person I needed to see. Personal contact is very important in Montserrat and because I took the time to meet people first before the interview I usually established a good relationship with them and they did anything they could to help me. In such a small community making an enemy of just one person can mean that you isolate yourself completely. I was always honest about the project and willing to listen and take note of any criticisms these people in authority had. To stop officials forming the impression that I was just another researcher from overseas hoping to further my academic career through taking from Montserrat, I made a point of asking their advice and for any tips they could give me about how to do the project. This served two purposes, it taught me a lot about the island and Montserratians and I gained much more help from people because they felt involved and useful.

I decided to interview 100 employed women working in a range of jobs, but primarily those in the newly developing industries, such as manufacturing and clerical work. These industries were selected because they had recently expanded or were new. I chose 100 women because it was a number the Montserratians could visualise and it meant that I would not have to draw a very large sample from any one place of work. As I was doing the interviews during working hours it was important not to be greedy with the time I took up. I was very fortunate in that all the employers I approached agreed to let me interview some of their staff. Not only did they agree to that but they were very accommodating when I actually arrived to do the interviews, making sure I had somewhere to work. The approach I adopted to set up the interviews went in the following stages:

- 1) I contacted the employer and asked if I could interview them about their firm or department, having explained why I wanted to talk to them. Interviews with the employers served two purposes: they provided me with background information about each place of employment and gave the employers the opportunity to meet me and ask me more about the project. This was very important in getting their consent to interview employees.
- 2) During the appointment for their interview I discussed interviewing some employees; the number I could work with, how I could select them, and where and when I could do it. In most cases I arranged to spread the interviews out over a few weeks, so in some cases I only did one or two a week so that I did not disrupt their work schedule too much. My willingness to fit-in meant that employers were happy to grant me the time I needed.
- 3) Once a schedule for the interviews had been worked out with the employers, I then approached supervisors or those in a position of

authority over the workforce. I again explained the nature of the project to them and with them worked out a way of selecting interviewees. This was done in a variety of ways, once again to fit-in with whatever was easiest for the supervisors. Some women were selected by random sampling from employee lists, others were chosen for me by the supervisor and others were asked to volunteer to do the interview once I had explained to all employees who I was and what I wanted to do.

4) Having chosen the interviewees I began to conduct the interviews in the workplaces, always at times to suit the employers and employees. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes to half an hour. Some interviews were longer where the women were not so pressured to return to work and where they had a lot to say.

Out of the 100 women who were selected to be interviewed only six women said that they would rather not do it. In each case a replacement was found. The distribution of the 100 interviews went as follows; two farmers; eight Civil Servants (clerical); four employees of the Stamp Office (clerical); 16 bank employees (finance); 11 teachers; ten nurses; four machinists for Sun Tops Ltd (textiles); ten workers for Montserrat Textiles (textiles); 15 employees of Datapress (technical); and 20 assembly workers for Johnson's (manufacturing).

I decided to do ten interviews in Elseka. The interviewees were chosen because they, and the households in which they lived, were representative of the village as a whole. Three of the eight women were married, two of them with growing families who still lived at home. Three of the women were in stable visiting relationships. One of them had a child from the union, the other two were responsible for raising children that were not their own. One woman was separated from her husband and

lived with her two grown sons. The eighth woman was not involved in a stable visiting union but had boyfriends and had a child who did not live with her. The two men were both involved in visiting unions, both had children from previous unions and one became a father again while I lived in the village. All ten people were people I was able to build up some kind of relationship with before the interview and this enabled me to conduct lengthy and detailed interviews. Because I knew these people and they trusted me I was able to ask many more personal questions, especially in relation to sexuality. Each interview was taped and either conducted in the interviewees home or in my house, in all cases in private. While other members of the village who became friends would not agree to give me a formal interview they would discuss topics covered in the interview and knew that I would probably use it in my thesis.

I carried out a household survey in Elseka going from house to house and asking one household member questions about who lived there and the nature of relationships between household members. This gave me the information I needed about household structures and also served to introduce me to people in the village as I took the time to explain who I was and what I was doing. I always had someone from the village with me, to show me how to reach the more inaccessible houses and to introduce me. They also helped to verify the information that I was given to make sure I gained as accurate an enumeration as possible. Once again the openness and friendliness of the people I questioned made the survey not only successful but also enjoyable. Friendships with many of women were forged during the survey.

In order to find out the opinions of the future generation of lovers and parents I decided to do short questionnaires with school-children aged 13 to 16. I had planned to do questionnaires with children at the three secondary schools but, as will be explained below, this was not possible. I eventually managed to carry out 50 questionnaires with children at the Seventh Day Adventist School and in Elseka itself. The questionnaires carried out at the school were administered to two classes of children, each of 13 students, during two lunch time breaks. Confidentiality was assured and the children filled them in independently and without anyone else seeing what they had written. I had no way of identifying which children had completed which questionnaire. In the village, children either came to my house or I went to theirs and stayed with them until they had completed it. To ensure that I would not know who had done which questionnaire they put their own questionnaire in amongst the pile of the school children's which were in my room or which I took with me to the child's house.

4.3.2 Difficulties

The main problem with using a tape recorder was ensuring that the level of background noise did not drown the interview. When I interviewed women in a textile factory the machinery was extremely noisy and even though we sat in the supervisors office it was often difficult to hear what was said. In such cases I always transcribed the interviews the same evening so that I would remember most of what had been said. One interview I conducted with a nurse on the night-shift caused unforeseen problems when I came to transcribe it a few days later. I had thought that the ward was perfectly quiet and there was no background noise. When I came to listen to the tape I found that every third or fourth word of

the interview was wiped out by the high pitched sound of a cicada call. The human ear gets so used to the noisy tropical night full of the sounds of cicadas, crickets and tree frogs that I had not noticed this particularly persistent cicada, which must have been just outside the open shutters. I had to repeat much of the interview during a quiet time in the day shift. The other difficulty about using tapes was the length of time necessary to transcribe the information. Each interview took anything from one to three hours and was usually done in the evenings after I could be sure I would not get any more visitors, as I was determined to transcribe each tape privately to maintain confidentiality. However, I think that the quality of material gained through taped interviews warrants the time spent in transcribing.

There were no real problems with the background interviews but I did gain the impression that everyone wanted to create a glowing image of Montserrat or of their business or department. I found people unwilling to be honest about problems that clearly existed. They seemed to be doing a public relations job a lot of the time. While this is understandable it was a little frustrating but as I spent over ten months on the island I was able to sort out much of the fact from the gloss through personal experience. The interviews with employees also gave a genuine insight. The other minor problem was time. People have a different attitude to time in the Caribbean and if things can be put off until tomorrow they usually will be. This meant that some interviews were difficult to get because people kept forgetting or saying that they just did not feel like doing it on the day we had arranged. However, the quality of information I got and the help I was given more than compensated for the inconvenience of losing a few hours or days.

The difficulties in conducting the interviews with employed women were bound up mostly with the time constraint and not with any difficulties with the women themselves. As there was a limited time for the interviews, I could not always follow up a comment made in the way I would have liked to because it would have foreshortened the rest of the interview. Also the shortage of time did not allow me to get to know the women as much as I would have liked in order to be able to put them totally at their ease. In the event, this latter difficulty proved not to be as bad as I had feared because so many of the women relaxed as we progressed. Indeed, by the end of the interview they were talking to me as though they had known me for some time. In some cases, for example in Bank 2, with the district nurses, and with some of the teachers, there was not such a time restriction and I was able to delve deeper into the more sensitive areas.

The only problem in doing interviews in the village was the difficulty in interviewing men. The two men I interviewed took the interview as an opportunity to 'chat me up'; even more so than when I had first got to know them and asked them about doing the interview. Both interviews had to be stopped halfway through to allow me time to explain to them that I wanted to interview them for my research and did not want to go to bed with them. They were both quite open about the fact that they already had girlfriends and they knew I was involved with someone but they still wanted to go to bed with me. After making my thoughts on the matter clear they both agreed to continue on another day and did not proposition me during the second part of the interview. From these experiences it soon became clear that I could not get to know men and conduct interviews with them without them believing that I was sexually

interested in them. Furthermore, interviewing men led the rest of the village to think that I was going to bed with the men I interviewed. When I interviewed Jacob in his home some women saw me go in and then emerge an hour later. They passed various comments about my sexual conduct and about taking another woman's man. I knew one of the group quite well and so I tried to explain that I had done an interview but I am sure some of them remained unconvinced; no one would want to talk to a young man they did not know very well for all that time without something sexual happening. I had to be very careful about doing the second half of the interview and did not see Jacob at his home again. I was told by some of the older women in the village that I was being discussed and that some people were beginning to think that I was sexually loose and was having sex with many men in the village. My reputation and position as a welcome visitor to the village was in jeopardy. If I had continued to interview men the rumours would have continued, fanned by the bragging of the men involved who would want to convince people they had 'sexed a white woman'. I would have been socially ostracised and unable to continue my work, not only in the village but throughout the island. I therefore decided that I could not do any more interviews with men. However, because of my involvement with Linton I was able to have some degree of contact with men, mostly his friends and brother, and so I managed to collect information through less formal channels.

The main problem with the household survey was that of people being suspicious about why I was asking questions, especially elderly women who received welfare payments. They thought I was from the government and trying to find out information about them to reduce their money. Although I was careful to try and explain what I was doing, a few of them would

not give me the details I wanted. However, their neighbours usually answered the questions for me. It was also important that someone from the village came with me because some men gave me false information. A few young men told me that they lived on their own when in fact they were cohabiting with their girlfriends. One man told me he was living with his sister and mother, when it was in fact he lived with his girlfriend and her mother. This was again an example of the men trying to show that they were 'available'. The women who came round the village with me took great delight in telling me the true nature of household membership in front of these men.

The problems that arose over the children's questionnaires were the most difficult I had to cope with. I had planned to administer the questionnaire to six classes of secondary school-children in the three secondary schools. This would have amounted to about 180 to 200 questionnaires which would have given me a very good sample of what children thought about certain issues. I asked the Director of Education for permission having explained to her what the questionnaire would ask the children about. She gave me her consent to discuss it with the headteachers. I then approached one of the school principals who checked the questionnaire and said that I could administer it to two classes of children, aged 14 and 15. I administered the questionnaire to the classes after explaining carefully to them what it was about and for. The day after this first set of questionnaires was completed I was woken by an early morning telephone call and told that the Minister of Education wanted the questionnaires on her desk before she got there and would see me later in the day. I took all the questionnaires into Plymouth and left them on the Minister's desk, with a letter explaining why I was doing the

interviews, the procedure I had followed and why the questionnaires were important to my project. I then made an appointment with her secretary to see her that afternoon. When I went to meet her I was kept waiting for an hour and then told that she could not see me but would see me the following morning. At 9am on the Wednesday morning I met with the Minister who informed me that the questionnaires had been destroyed and I would not be allowed to continue my work with school children. I was not given any explanation about why such a decision was made; I was simply told that the matter was closed and if I wished to continue my work on the island I had better forget the whole thing. However, I managed to get 50 questionnaires completed because the principal of the Seventh Day Adventist School agreed to let me administer them to her third and fourth year classes. A further 24 parents and guardians in the village allowed their children to fill out the questionnaires. The gender imbalance was caused because there were fewer boys at the Seventh Day Adventist school. Parents seemed to prefer the atmosphere of the school with its formal teaching and emphasis on morality and religion for their daughters. So there were only eight boys and 18 girls in the two classes. Despite the gender imbalance I think the responses that emerged from the questionnaires were fairly typical of children of that age. It was unfortunate that I was prevented from doing a larger study.

4.4 Living and Working in Elseka

I moved into a rented house in Elseka, three weeks after I had been on the island, and stayed there until I left in August 1987, ten months later. I had initially rented an apartment in the expatriate part of the island while I decided which village would be best to live in. Elseka was

chosen because it was quite a large village of more than 150 households and was fairly self-contained. It had a nursery, a primary school and a large church/village hall. There were five churches in the village: Anglican, Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, Church of God and Apostolic Faith. There were several grocery shops, a bakery, three rum shops and a hardware shop. It was possible for most people to get what they needed from the village without having to go into Plymouth every week. While many people worked in Plymouth or on the Lover's Lane industrial estate there were others who worked in the village or at the airport and so not every one 'commuted' daily to the town. There was a small women's sewing co-operative which met each week and was supposed to be helping unemployed women learn a skill and earn some money. In fact it was mostly a time when women could meet together and discuss the weeks events, both in the village and island wide. It proved to be a very good way for me to meet women and maintain contact with them in an informal setting. Elseka had a strong sense of community and people would identify themselves as Elseka people first and Montserratians second. They would tell jokes about the poor development of neighbouring villages such as Stanley and Breezy Place. These small villages had no churches, no shops and no schools. Other islanders would also identify Elseka people as a group, especially to tell their own jokes about how nosey Elseka people could be. Elseka seemed to be the obvious choice.

I rented a small two-bedroomed concrete or 'wall' house. It had a kitchen/dining room, where I was able to work, and an inside toilet and shower. There was also water from a single tap in the kitchen. There was no hot water and for ten months I endured cold morning showers. The house was owned by the daughters of a well-respected Elseka woman who had recently died. The fact that these daughters, now living in New York,

consented via another respected woman in the village, to let me stay there, gave me some respectability from the moment I moved in.

The house was in good repair, had a wooden roof as opposed to a galvanised metal one, and even had two glass windows. In order to move in I had to move a huge variety of insects out. The kitchen was infested with large brown cockroaches, 'mahogany beetles', of about two inches long and extremely fast on their hairy legs. A trail of black biting ants ran from the front door out through the back bedroom shutters. It took two days to persuade them to make their journey around the house rather than through it. The back wooden door was riddled with termites. After forcing the door open to get a through draught I wished that I had not because large pieces of decayed wood fell out of it and termites swarmed into the kitchen. Two cans of Raid insect killer later, I had a colony of dead termites on my kitchen floor. The cockroaches were the most difficult to get rid of and just when I thought I had succeeded, I would go into the kitchen at night to get a drink to see one lurking under a chair or table. I became quite a fast draw with a shoe and managed to keep the population under some degree of control.

Once the house was in order I had to learn to cope with the walk from the road to my house. This involved a five minute walk along a narrow dirt track, through assorted bushes and over a small stream, before reaching my own garden. When there was a full moon it was as though the path was floodlit. When there was no moon it was impossible to see where I was going and I had several close encounters with a coconut tree and ruined numerous crops of vegetables in my neighbours garden. While my house seemed fairly inaccessible to me it was not nearly so difficult for my neighbours to reach. At the height of the mango season, the tree in my garden which bore particularly delicious grafted mangoes,

would be subject to praedial larceny. I would often be woken by the rustling of leaves and the grunts of someone trying to reach just one more mango. I was also visited on several occasions by an elderly, often drunk, man who came to declare his undying love for me. He would wail outside from beneath the coconut palm until I went out. He would then tell me that he could be a really good boyfriend to me and promptly collapse into a drunken sleep in the middle of the sugar cane patch. Since this was the most serious harassment I encountered I felt very safe living in the village.

I realised that it was very important to make the right impression on people as soon as I moved into the village if I was to be able to do any work there. I was one of the first white people to live in the village, and certainly the only single white woman to do so. My arrival caused quite a stir. When I first caught the buses into the village and called for the driver to stop in Elseka, people would be very surprised and tell me that we had not reached the 'white', ex-patriot area yet. They were very curious when I told them that this was where I lived. One bus driver said this to me;

"What a white girl does come to live in Elseka? Man me can't believe the people them so lucky as that!"

I was nervous about the best way to get to know people in the village. In small villages it can be difficult for an outsider to get to know people, but I had the added factors of being from another culture, and a white person in a black village. My first real contact with anyone occurred as I waited for a bus to take me into town after spending the day cleaning the house. Until the 'fumigation' was complete I could not sleep there. Children were leaving primary school. A group of school-girls in their bright gingham skirts and white blouses walked past me,

staring. After passing me, they stopped. One of the taller girls was pushed towards me and asked me my name. I told her it was Tracey and she ran back to the group. All the girls then shouted 'Hello, Chasey', their way of pronouncing my name. When I next went into the village everyone greeted me with; 'Good Morning, Chasey.' and 'How are you this morning, Chasey?' The ice was broken and I quickly got to know people.

Another event which allowed me to meet people was the Christmas Show in the primary school. I was invited by a woman who was to become a very close friend and interviewee who I met when doing the first part of my household survey. One of her daughters collected me and took me to the school where I joined her mother and the other children. I was stared at a great deal, whispered about and smiled at. The play was extremely funny with the children not only remembering all their lines but ad-libbing as well. Outside the hall the teenage boys and girls of the village were taking the opportunity to spend some time, unchaperoned, with each other and there was a great deal of giggling and banter. I noticed that very few fathers, grandfathers or men were present but all children had a female relative there to see them. This was indicative of the pattern of childcare I was later to discover through my fieldwork.

Early in my stay in the village I was approached by many men who wanted to be my boyfriend. Before moving into the village I had become involved with Linton and he often came to visit and stay with me in Elseka. I made it quite clear to the men that I already had a boyfriend and that I was not interested in casual sexual affairs. Some were very persistent and told me that they would be very discrete and that Linton would never know they had been. They did not seem to understand that I did not want to go to bed with them, not because of Linton finding out but because my feelings were for Linton and him alone. The men were

sometimes quite open about the fact that they had other girlfriends. One man even came to my house to pester me when his girlfriend was in hospital having their baby. These visits in the first few weeks taught me something about men's attitudes towards relationships and women which I was later able to investigate further through the interviews.

My relationship with Linton taught me a great deal about the effects of men boasting and the jealousy a partner can feel when he thinks his girlfriend has been unfaithful. Two men, who were disappointed in their attempts to get me into bed, still boasted about the fact they had 'fucked the white woman in she own house', and taunted Linton with this when he next came to the village. He came in in an angry mood and confronted me about what had been said. Initially I thought the whole thing quite pathetic; to me it was so obvious they were lying. Linton, however, took it seriously and we argued over it. It was only when I confronted one of the men directly, while Linton was with me, and asked him why he was lying, that he admitted it had been just a joke and that he had never been inside my house, let alone in my bed. Both men were quite stunned at my methods. I later found out that women never confront the men who have been lying about them. To me it seemed the only way I could convince Linton of my innocence.

My relationship with Linton, was, to say the least, difficult. It was mostly because of the huge cultural differences between us and the pressures put on him by other people; not everyone approved of him having a white girlfriend and many of the men were jealous. However, despite the difficulties we stayed together through my time on the island and I feel that I learnt a great deal from him and through my relationship with him. With Linton I could go to places which as a white person and as a woman I would never normally be able to go. I got to see the inside of rum shops,

to meet Rastafarian men who lived way out in the hills, to sit in and watch poker games, to go to parties and festival events where I was the only white person. I therefore saw a side of Montserratian life that I would never have known. Our relationship also gave me an insight into the kind of problems Montserratian women face because of the attitude of their partners, especially in terms of jealousy, possessiveness, and assumptions about how women should behave. Although Linton held some traditional ideas about how women should behave he was also somewhat atypical in that he helped me with the housework. He would do most of the cooking while I was transcribing interviews or talking with friends who came round. This was partly because he wanted to help me and partly because he was much better at cooking Caribbean food than I was. Women friends who came to visit while he was in the kitchen would ask me;

"Girl, how you get a man to be so good to you and do all this for you? Me never before see a man cook for the woman unless she sick or something."

Far from teasing Linton about his housework they would praise him and ask him if he wanted to go and visit them. Linton himself was not ashamed of being seen in the kitchen and even entered an argument about why men should help women in the home with a teenage boy. The most atypical part of our relationship was that he would spend so much time with me and he very rarely went out without me, unless we had had an argument. We were both teased about this;

"Boy, what happen, you marry to the girl or something?"

"You always take her everywhere, she so special or something?"

"Seems to me the girl does bewitch you, boy, you not a casanova no more!"

Montserratian couples may meet up at a party and leave together but they would very rarely go together. It is also unusual for a man to go to so

many things with the same woman. The teasing was mostly light-hearted but it sometimes became more serious and Linton often got into aggressive arguments with men who insulted him or me.

When I first moved into the village and people did not know about Linton, older women took it upon themselves to protect me from the 'good-for-muttings' in Elseka. After Christmas I was invited to a party by Tanti D. at her house. Most people from the village were there and I was introduced to everyone and made to feel very welcome. Most of the women and older people were sitting inside or on the veranda, and the younger men were on the steps or in the yard. I was called down into the yard by one of Linton's friends who wanted to give me a message for Linton. I had only been down in the yard for a few minutes when Tanti D. rushed down, told the man to clear off from her party and dragged me by my arm into the kitchen. Everyone inside the house had come out onto the veranda to watch. Tanti D. was shouting at me, telling me;

"Girl, you have no shame! To talk with such a man and in front of all the people them. Me tell you Elseka men are bad and you have to keep away from them!"

I was embarrassed and shocked about what I thought was an over-reaction. I apologised to Tanti D. and explained that I had not thought there was anything wrong with talking to him, that I knew him and that he was only giving me a message to give to someone else. She then relaxed;

"Girl, me sorry for that then, me think you was talking sex and so. Me have to protect you, you know, because you don't have no family here and so is people like me who is your family and we don't want you to get in anything with the bad men them, because they just like wolves sometimes, especially for the white women."

Tanti D. then dragged me into the still hushed lounge and announced that she had made a mistake, that I was a good girl but I had learnt my lesson. The party continued as before and I was welcomed back into the room.

The above incident taught me something about the control of young women and the expected behaviour for women in public places. Had I not handled the situation carefully my reputation could have plunged down to 'wutless' and I would have been socially ostracised. Fortunately, the situation was resolved and Tanti D. became a friend and always defended me if ever she heard any negative gossip about me.

Living in Elseka was not always easy because my every movement was under close scrutiny and I could never go anywhere or speak to anyone without most people finding out about it. Sometimes I would go out to visit American friends in the expatriate area just to have a break from always being watched. However, the way I was accepted and encouraged to take part in village life was flattering and made my ten month stay in the village most enjoyable and very happy. I plan to return.

4.5 Profiles of Interviewees

This final section presents some background information about the people I interviewed. It is their comments, thoughts and ideas that form the basis of the next four chapters. Here I would like to present some material about them so that they appear as people rather than as a series of quotes. The 100 employed women are presented as a group and most of the information about them is presented in table form. The people interviewed in the village are introduced through short thumb-nail sketches which tell something about their character and background, but details that would give away their identity are not presented.

4.5.1 Profiles: 100 employed women

First let us look at the age-range of the women and their place of employment.

Table 4.1 Ages of employed women by place of employment

Job type	Age group							
	>20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	50+
Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Clerical	-	3	3	3	1	2	-	-
Finance	1	9	-	3	3	-	-	-
Textiles	2	8	3	1	-	-	-	-
Teaching	-	2	3	2	-	1	1	2
Nursing	-	-	3	2	2	2	1	-
Technical	2	6	2	2	3	-	-	-
Manufacturing	1	8	9	1	1	-	-	-
Total	6	36	23	14	10	5	3	3

Source: Interviews with employed women

We can see that the sample is biased towards the age-group 21 to 30. This is representative of the distribution of the female workforce as it is women who are now in their twenties who have been able to take the greatest advantage of the new employment opportunities.

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of where the women live. Their actual village addresses are not used to protect their anonymity, rather they are placed in either North, South, East, Town or New Areas. These are all shown on map 4.2.

Table 4.2 Areas where employed women live

Job Type	Area North	South	East	Town	New Areas
Agriculture	2	-	-	-	-
Clerical	4	1	-	3	4
Finance	5	3	2	3	3
Textiles	3	1	4	6	-
Teaching	4	-	2	3	1
Nursing	3	1	-	5	1
Technical	7	2	2	4	-
Manufacturing	5	3	9	3	-
Totals	34	11	27	27	9

Source: Interviews with employed women

There is a slight bias towards the North in this sample. This does not reflect the national pattern because St. Peter's parish which covers the north is the second most populous parish, after St. Anthony's which includes Plymouth. However my definition of North does not match the parish boundaries but rather what Montserratians themselves call North. Therefore, some women have been assigned to the North area, but in a census would be enumerated in St. Anthony's parish. When we take this into account the sample is not so very different from the population distribution of the island as a whole. Only women in the professional groups live in the more expensive newly developed areas where land and housing have to be bought rather than passed on through the family. The women have to get a mortgage to build these houses and so they are not the type of housing that manual workers can afford because their wages are not high enough to allow them to get a mortgage.

Table 4.3 shows the place of birth of the women by their employment type. It is clear that most women were born in Montserrat. Those born in Curacao all grew up in Montserrat. Many Montserratian men and women went to Curacao in the early 1950s when the Shell oil refinery was opened and

migrant labour was needed. Curacao had a policy of repatriation for any single non-curacaon women who became pregnant, and so many women were forced to return to Montserrat after their child had been born. Other women sent their children home to be raised by relatives while they carried on working in Curacao.

Table 4.3 Place of birth by workplace

Job type	Place of birth					
	Montserrat	Dominica	Curacao	Antigua	St.Kitts/ Nevis	Other
Agriculture	2	-	-	-	-	-
Clerical	11	-	-	-	-	1
Finance	14	-	2	-	-	-
Textiles	12	-	-	1	-	1
Teaching	7	1	1	-	-	2
Nursing	6	-	-	1	1	2
Technical	11	1	1	-	1	1
Manufacturing	14	3	-	1	2	-
Total	77	5	4	3	4	7

Note: Other includes one woman from each of the following; Barbados, Guyana, India, Jamaica, St.Vincent, U.K., Trinidad.

Source: Interviews with employed women.

This small sample shows how much movement there is between the islands. The woman from India came to Montserrat because her husband was transferred there from East Africa as he was employed by the British Government. The woman from the U.K. came to live in Montserrat when she married a Montserratian who she met while working on the island for a development agency. The women from Dominica were interesting because while one had moved to Montserrat because she married a Montserratian the others came in search of work. Dominica was devastated by Hurricane David in 1979 and many women lost everything. If they had relatives on Montserrat they joined them because the chances for employment were much

greater. Antigua and St.Kitts/Nevis are the closest English-speaking islands to Montserrat. There is quite an exchange of labour between Antigua and Montserrat, but few Montserratians go and work on St.Kitts or Nevis because there are less employment opportunities there.

Table 4.4 shows the marital status of the employed women and table 4.5 shows the union status of the women. These tables provide just an overview as the union patterns in which women are involved are discussed in greater detail in Chapter VII.

Table 4.4 Marital status of employed women

Married	Single	Separated	Divorced	Widowed
24	71	1	3	1

Source: Interviews with employed women.

Table 4.5 Union status of employed women

Married	Cohabiting	Visiting	Single	Separated/divorced widowed
24	6	46	19	5

Source: Interviews with employed women.

The final table in this section shows the religious affiliation of the employed women. Montserrat, like the rest of the Caribbean, is a religious island. The church is a central part of the community and a very important institution. Almost everyone, especially women and children, attend church every Sunday, and often more frequently. The church is an important part of women's social life and is a place where they can go and spend time without their reputation being called into question. Women tend to do a lot of work for their church and form the bulk of the congregations. However, positions of responsibility are

almost always held by men. Women cannot join the most important women's church organisation, the Mother's Union (or its equivalent in non-established churches), unless they are married. This means these organisations do not reflect the actual number of female church members.

Table 4.6 Religious affiliation

Anglican	Catholic	SDA	Methodist	Pentecostal	Baptist & others	Hindu	No Faith
24	12	14	21	15	10	1	3

Note: SDA is Seventh Day Adventist.

Baptist & others includes the following; Apostolic Faith, Church of Christ, Church of God, Christian Mission and Jehova's Witnesses.

Source: Interviews with employed women.

The women who said that they had no faith were either atheists or agnostics. They had all gone to church when they were younger but now felt that there were too many things in religious teaching that they could not agree with, they preferred to 'study on my own'. The sects that are included in the category 'others' are mostly sects from the United States and there is quite a lot of interchange between churches in the USA and Montserrat. I found no evidence of any African type religions such as Shouter, Pocomania, Vodun found in some of the Caribbean islands (Lowenthal:1972,114). However, people did make references to Obeah, African magic. Ancient African rituals were still evident in the festival parade where groups of masquerades, with distinctive African style costumes, danced ancient dances.

4.5.2 Profiles: ten people of Elseka

Vivette was the first woman I interviewed. She was 24 years old, had one child who was looked after by his paternal grandparents, and had no regular boyfriend. However that is not to say Vivette was not sexually active. In fact she was one of the so-called 'whores' I was warned not to spend any time with (Chapter VIII). She preferred to spend her time with 'strangers', white men who came in to the island on holiday, to record at the Air Studios or from the naval ships. I do not think she had ever had a proper job and probably lived off gifts she received from her numerous transient 'boyfriends'. Vivette was lively, extremely confident and totally at ease about her sexuality. While she was criticised for her behaviour, some women had some sense of respect for her because she had never been seen to be dependent on or submissive to a man. She was certainly lively company and time spent with Vivette was never dull.

Clara was the exact opposite to Vivette. She was shy and quiet but had strong views that she would discuss on a one to one basis. She looked older than her 32 years, probably because she had had seven children, the first when she was just 14. She was married to a man much older than her who had taken on the care of the four children she already had. Their relationship was peaceful, without any obvious affection but she had a great deal of respect for her husband who had never treated her children any differently from his own. Clara felt her independence within the marriage was important and so she had always worked as a domestic. She had clear ideas about the traditional role of a woman. A woman should be a mother and care for her partner in the best way possible.

Bertha was a lively woman whose strength and determination belied her 63 years. She made her living 'agressively' selling her vegetables in town. She had been married but was now separated from her husband and 'couldn't be bothered with all that now'. She had raised five children and suffered two miscarriages. Only two of her grown children still lived on Montserrat, they lived with her. Bertha had visited her other children in Canada and worried about how hard life was for people in such cold and grey cities. Bertha could talk for hours about nothing in particular but occasionally some golden piece of advice for the younger generation would slip out. While people thought her a little eccentric they held her in some affection and would always have time to speak with her.

Violetta was much more mature than her 19 years suggested, probably because of the hardships she had endured. She had been informally adopted by a lone elderly woman because her family was large and poor. Her father had died and her mother became so ill she could not look after the other children who were scattered throughout the island to be with relatives. Soon after Violetta left school and began her first job, her adoptive parent died. Within a few months she became pregnant, something she had not wanted to happen while she was so young. However she coped well as a young mother and with a full-time career. Violetta had her maternity leave when I first moved into the village and so I was able to spend a lot of time with her and her beautiful baby. She had a quiet personality that concealed a firm determination to do what she wanted to do with her own life. She had a strong relationship with the baby's father but was very careful about keeping her independence within the relationship.

Alice was a professional woman who did not have any children of her own but had cared for her godson since he was three. The church was a very important part of her life, as was music. She had been to university overseas to further her music studies. In her middle thirties she was in a stable visiting relationship. She hoped to get married but probably not to her current partner who was too possessive for her liking. Bearing the burden of running a household because of her mother's illness and her brothers' laziness, Alice had grown to be a strong minded woman, but not very self-confident as far as her femininity and sexuality were concerned. She was a very respected member of the community and active in many church activities, where I understand she was a force to be reckoned with.

Mayetta was the only woman of my age who I interviewed, aged 25. She was a very confident, generous and open person with a great sense of humour. A meeting with Mayetta was always good fun, the interview with her was full of laughter. Despite having a very painful illness, she gave a lot of time and help to other people. She was not a 'do gooder' but someone who felt that she had been lucky in life and enjoyed helping people. She wanted every one to have the chance to improve their position. Mayetta was always enthusiastic about things and gave me a lot of help and encouragement with my research. She had many plans for the future, planning to improve her educational qualifications, and to have children of her own. Although the church was very important in her life she had a visiting relationship with a Rastafarian, ignoring the criticisms she received. Their relationship was a firm one and he was unusually faithful.

Ruth was 62, had a powerful personality and an energy that made it hard to accept her age. I would not believe her until she showed me her passport. Ruth was one of the 'wise' women in the village who used her own experience to advise but never lecture other people. She had a wide knowledge of plants and their medicinal uses and her skills were much sought after. Her house was always open to visitors and she cooked the best 'goat water' I have ever tasted. Ruth and her husband became my self-appointed surrogate grandparents. Tuesday afternoons became a ritual talking session in their bright wooden house where I would be encouraged to drink glasses of beer and vodka, but not to tell the Minister. The church was an important part of Ruth's life but it did not mean that she made moral judgements about how other people should lead their lives. I found her to be a great source of support and advice when I had difficulties with Linton, and yet nothing of what I said was ever repeated. Ruth was a trustworthy person and very much respected. She was also a great story teller and recalled much of the village history and characters.

Celeste became my closest friend in the village and we are still in touch. She was married with five children, but she regretted her marriage. She was a good and loving mother and her children adored her and for the sake of her children she had to stay in the marriage. Her poorly paid job meant that she could not support them alone. Despite her difficult husband Celeste managed to give a great deal in her friendships and always made any visitors welcome. She was a fun loving woman and although forbidden to go out very much she would always want to hear about any adventures I had had. She laughed easily although there was always a sadness in her face because she felt that her life was slipping

away from her and that there was nothing she could do. Whenever I had difficulties with the study, sometimes lacking the will to continue, Celeste would always fill me with enthusiasm as she felt that the research was very important, not only for myself but for Montserratian women. Her friendship is something that still spurs me on to work whenever the enthusiasm is flagging.

Samuel was 24, extremely confident and a 'ladies man'. He was a skilled labourer with a good income and had worked on other islands. Always on the look out for an attractive woman he was a very smooth talker and flatterer. He lived with his girlfriend and her family, but also spent a lot of time with his mother. While I was in the village he became a father again and clearly adored his son. The strong, macho image disappeared when he craddled his tiny child. Samuel was a typical Montserratian man; he boasted about his sexual conquests, real or imagined, he sweet-talked almost every young woman he met, he was persistent and usually successful. However he did have some emotional attachment to his current girlfriend, which intensified after their child was born. He also thought the world of his mother and was very protective towards his younger sister and brother.

Jacob was a shy 30 year old, who never seemed to get worried about anything. He was just 'cool', content in his current visiting relationship, and while he may consider a casual flirtation he was not as persistent or eager as Samuel. Jacob was reaching the age when he might consider settling down. He had one child who he very rarely saw and who he supported through a court order for bastardy payments. He had been a macho figure in the past, not really caring very much about the

girlfriends he had, but he seemed to have calmed down. He was nervous and smiled a lot, but was also very laid back.

The above pen-portraits give an impression of the people I got to know and interviewed. It was difficult to get to know the men for the reasons stated above. It was very easy to form close and supportive friendships with the women and very soon I found myself included in various household networks with these women and their families. I miss the friendships I made on Montserrat and I very much miss the way of life I was so privileged to lead in Elseka.

CHAPTER V
WOMEN AND MEN IN THE HOME:
GENDER RELATIONS IN THE MONTSERRATIAN HOUSEHOLD

5.1 Introduction

Chapter II presented the reasons for considering the household as an area of social organisation within which to investigate the nature of gender relations. This chapter presents empirical data collected in Montserrat to investigate the form gender relations take in the household. It will also consider the maintenance and reproduction of such relations.

The data emerge from three different parts of the fieldwork: the households of origin and the current households of the 100 employed women who were interviewed¹; detailed information from 10 intensive interviews carried out in the study village; a general household survey of the study village; and information from short questionnaires carried out with 50 secondary school children. The data on these households provide a cross-sectional snapshot of what the chapter will show to be a highly dynamic form.

Initially, methodological considerations related to studying the household will be discussed. The four components shown in diagram 3.1 will be considered. Finally conclusions will be drawn about the nature, maintenance and reproduction of gender relations in the Montserratian household.

5.2 Methodological Considerations

The various methodologies used and explanations for their use are presented in Appendix 1. Hence this section will only mention aspects of methodology directly related to the study of the household.

As has been said in Chapter III:49

"In an investigation of gender relations in the household some form of categorisation is necessary but it must be one that has been developed from the fieldwork on the community under study and an accurate reflection of the domestic organisation found therein."

Due to the rich variety of household organisation found in Montserrat a large number of categories are used for household classification. While this may at first seem cumbersome, it is necessary in order to represent accurately the diversity that exists.

A specific difficulty relating to the household survey in the village was that the pattern of household membership was very dynamic, with people moving between households and out of the village altogether, either permanently or temporarily. This is a distinctive feature of Caribbean household organisation (Brana-Shute, 1976:56), but it does make empirical work and data analysis complicated. However, while the actual numbers involved in any of the household categories will change over short periods of time, the categories themselves remain valid for longer.

The quotes from the interviews are written as they were actually spoken. In Montserratian English past and present tenses are used interchangeably, regardless of when the event actually took place. Pronouns are also confused and an interviewee may begin to talk about a situation and use the term 'you', change halfway through to 'I' and later use 'she'. A glossary of terms and expressions is given in Appendix II.

5.3 Household Structure and Dynamism in Montserrat

This section is divided into four parts. The first part will look at the data on the households of origin for the 100 employed women. This is information about the household in which the women were raised and so

allows us to look at any possible changes in the forms of household structure over time. The second part will look at the data from the interviews with 100 employed women about their current household structure. Part three will consider the general household survey of the study village and the data is presented in the form of a classification table. The final part will consider the data from the intensive village interviews concerning household structure.

5.3.1 Households of origin

The results from these data are presented in tables 5.1 and 5.2. There is no information for 15 of the women as they did not grow up in Montserrat but came to the island in their adult life. The first three columns show the percentage figures for the 85 women concerning the presence or absence of their fathers. Columns five, six and seven show the percentage figures representing the marital status of the women's parents.

Table 5.1 Presence/absence of father and marital status of parents

No. used for %'s	father present	father absent, did not know him	father absent, knew him	parents married	parents unmarried	parents divorced, widowed	not raised in Mont- serrat
85	34.1	25.9	40	49.4	50.6	7	No.15

Source: Interviews with employed women.

Table 5.1 shows that the number of women who lived in households where their own father was present for the majority of the time is only 34.1%. However, 40% of the women knew their father even though he was not present in the household where they were growing up. Although a sizable

number of women did not know their fathers when they were growing up, 25.9%, several women stated that as adults they now knew them. If we consider the proportion of women who said that their parents were married, we find that almost exactly the same had married parents, 49.4%, as those whose parents were unmarried, 50.6 %. Seven percent of those with married parents said that their parents either divorced or separated, or their fathers died during their childhood. An interesting point is that while 42% of the samples' parents remained married during the womens childhoods only 34.1% reported that their fathers were present in the household. This discrepancy of 8.2% is probably due to their fathers emigrating abroad to the UK or the USA for employment. This was a common phenomenon in the 1950s and 1960s (Philpott 1973).

What is striking about these results is that 65.9% of the women were raised in households without their fathers. This may have led to the development of close bonds with their mothers and a socialisation into accepting that the raising of children is not a feature of paternal responsibility. This will undoubtedly have affected the women's ideas about appropriate and accepted behaviour from any future partners they may have had or have children with. For example interview 49 had little respect for her father and later in the interview made it clear that she thought men could not be relied upon;

"I have never known him [father]. He was married to my mother but he went away when she was pregnant with me. She had two children previously for him. He went to England and never came back. We heard that he's with a white lady now and has changed his name, he's probably a bigamist....Well the men aren't serious, they prefer to have a child here and come and bring the money and perhaps stay the night and then leave. Some of them they are not responsible

We know, therefore, that in the majority of households fathers were not present. Let us now consider who was responsible for raising

these women as children. Table 5.2 shows a breakdown of the number of women raised by different categories of adults.

The category of mother and other relatives includes households where the mother lived with other adult relatives or in a household with a new partner who was not the father of the child in question, 16.5% of women were raised in such households

Table 5.2 Who the women were raised by

parents	mother alone	mother & other adults	relatives	non-relatives	no answer
34.1	29.4	16.5	16.5	3.5	15

Source: Interviews with employed women.

Where women were raised by relatives only it was for the most part grandparents, most commonly grandmothers. In the case of non-relatives this was where the girls were informally adopted by a non-relative, usually a single, elderly woman. 45.9% of women were raised without their fathers, 16.5% without either parent and 3.5% without any relatives at all. Only 34.1% of women were raised by both their parents whereas 29.4% were raised by their mothers alone. In many cases this would have been without any financial support from the father. At a time when there were few employment opportunities available to women this meant considerable financial hardship for these single-parent families;

Interview 87:

"Well she didn't really have a job, there was nothing much for women then. Then she fell in love with a man and so they cultivated ground and did farming and that's how she supported us."

Many of the women remembered the difficulties and the sacrifices their mothers made for them ². Such difficulties would once again have had the effect of socialising the girls about family life and the negative role

played by fathers. In cases where girls were raised by relatives other than their parents it was usually due to the overseas migration of their parents or because their mother had more children than she could manage to support on her own.

In conclusion I would suggest that the majority of these women were raised without a role model of a father. In contrast they would have received a very strong example of the role of mothers, even though this image may have been one of a mother's constant struggle to provide for her children, either in the absence of a father or his lack of support if he was present. The following quote from interviewee 75 tells of her mother's struggle to keep the children together in the face of a husband who treated her unfairly;

"As we got older she and her husband had a misunderstanding and so she left him and went to Dominica, she took us 5 children with her. After a while he took ill, his liver was bad because he drank too much. She came back to look for him once he was out of hospital and then he died. The misunderstanding was about him having a lot of women, and he was this 'macho' man so she couldn't put up with him. Then after a while had had an outside child and he wanted my mother to take the outside child to look for him alongside with her own and let the mother be free, and my mother said no. He said that if she don't do it he not going to support her, she had to depend on him, she cut out after a while and she got fed up with him and she decided to go home, but she took us all with her."

What we must now consider is whether the women reacted against this and so tried to establish households where the father of their children was present or rather that they too chose to follow the role model demonstrated by their mothers and formed households of a similar character to those that they themselves grew up in.

5.3.2 Current household structure

Before considering the structure of the employed women's current households I would like to look briefly at the women's stated reasons for

leaving home, if indeed they have left. Table 5.3 shows a breakdown of the reasons why women left their household of origin. The figures represent the percentages calculated from a total of 73 responses.

While 27 women gave no answer, (15 of whom were not raised in Montserrat), 42.5% women still lived at home with one or both of their parents or one or more relative. This demonstrates that while the membership of the household may be dynamic, many of the women themselves are relatively permanent members.

Table 5.3 **Reasons for leaving home**

marriage/ to live with boy- friend	old enough	disagree- ments or thrown out	education/ employment	emigration	orphaned	still at home
15.1	19.2	8.2	8.2	2.7	4.1	42.5

Source: Interviews with employed women.

Only 19.2% of women left because they felt that were independent enough to set up a household of their own. This reflects a general Montserratian pattern that adult children are usually welcome, even encouraged, to stay in their childhood home. On reaching adulthood and financial independence, although they may stay in the parental or maternal household, they are accorded such a degree of autonomy that many do not feel the need to leave home;

Interview 4;

"I haven't left home yet but we all moved house because my mother built our own house. It is good because we share everything, the bills and so and we all help each other. She helps me a lot with the children."

Interview 74;

"Well we are building a larger house now. My sister and I live downstairs but we eat with our parents, it works well."

When women left for reasons of employment it was usually because they began nursing training and had to go into the nurses' home. For the three women who emigrated it was only a temporary movement overseas to join one or both parents, although they later returned, two to their mother's home and one to get married. A few women left due to trouble at home, 8.2%. This was either in the form of arguments, usually with fathers or brothers, or they were thrown out because they became pregnant while still teenagers. This is a fairly common occurrence throughout the Caribbean, where the mother demonstrates her anger at the shame the pregnant teenager has brought upon her and the household and throws the girl out, usually in a noisy and public demonstration. In most cases a reconciliation is encouraged by maternal relatives but in some cases the girls decide to take the opportunity to establish their own household or to join another non-parental household.

Table 5.4 presents the categorisation of the households according to who the employed women live with. There are eight categories.

Table 5.4 Classification of households: employed women

100 wo- men	male part- ner	male part- ner & child- ren (2 ren)	women and child- ren (2 gens)	women and child- ren (3 gens)	all female adults and children	sib- ling adults	maternal relatives mother & children	parents	no cat- egory
100	5	26	13	12	18	4	4	14	4

Source: Interviews with employed women.

This shows clearly that the majority of women do not live with a male partner and that only 26% of these form the 'nuclear family' model of father, mother and their children. In some cases not all the children are from that union but from a previous sexual union of the mother.

Thirteen percent of women are raising their own children alone, and so form single parent households. Twelve percent of women are living with their children and with their own mothers in a maternal three-generational household. This household category also includes adult siblings who may or may not have their own children. Eighteen percent of women live in households with only adult women, although there may be male children and 14% still live with both their parents. The smallest category is that of sibling households and those where there is an extended family household form with adult maternal relatives such as aunts and uncles. The four women included in the 'no category' section are two women who live alone, a woman who lives with people who are no relation to her and a woman who has a distant cousin and an informally adopted child living with her.

The majority of women, 69%, live in a household where they have a considerable degree of autonomy and would be involved in the decision-making process. The latter includes decisions over financial matters, the raising of children and social activities. For a sizeable proportion of women, 30%, they are either running their household alone or with other adult women and so the level of female autonomy over the household is at its greatest in such households. For these women therefore the pattern of patriarchal gender relations does not exist within the household. Even women with other males present, excluding male partners, maintain considerable personal autonomy over decisions about their own money, how to raise their children, and about their own social life. For such women the nature of gender relations in their household does not appear to be in a patriarchal form. Below some of the women talk about how they share everything;

Interview 4;

"Well I live with my mother and brother and my two children. We all

share the things to do in the household, whoever gets home first will start to cook. Mother helps me a lot with the children, but they know that I am their mother and they have to do what I tell them most of all."

Interview 9;

"The housework is shared between my mother, my step-father and me. My step-father helps my mother a lot. I look after my little boy because I like to and because he is my son and I want to bring him up in my own way. We all share the bills equally and we talk about things to do with the house. I think it would be the same even if I didn't have a job, they would still include me."

Interview 11;

"Its just me and a friend live in the house and we do everything together. We share all the decisions and the responsibilities. It is the first time that I have lived in such an independent way and I love to do it, no-one tells me to do anything, I can relax when I want to, go out when I want to and there is no-one to order me about."

If we compare the findings about the households of origin and the current household we note that a similar proportion of households have a husband or boyfriend present - 29% and 31% of households respectively. In the current household structure only 13% of women are raising their children alone without the presence of other adults, in the households of origin this figure was 29%. It appears therefore that women in current times are not having to struggle to raise their children single-handedly as many of their mothers did. This difference may be due to the fact that many more of the women's mothers were married: although their husbands were not there to help them raise the children, they had to remain in the marital home and so did not gain the benefits of sharing their household with their own adult relatives. In cases where their husbands had gone away to work, the women would not be allowed to combine households because they had to maintain the home in readiness for his return. Also if the husband/father was remitting income it would have been unlikely for him to wish the money spent on anyone but his own family.

5.3.3 Household structures of Elseka

The data from the village household survey is again presented in the form of a table showing the household categories. The categorisation is slightly different from that for the employed women. In the study village there were sizeable numbers of households with just one woman or man living there. There were also 'grandmother households', where the grandmother was caring for her grandchildren in the absence of their mother or parents. If the grandmothers (or grandparents) still had their grown children as well as grandchildren living with them they were categorised as three-generational households. Some of the households displayed horizontal extended family membership. The 'other' category includes two households where fathers were raising their children. Most of the others in this category were households of unrelated people. The figures shown are percentages calculated from the total number of households surveyed, that is 156.

Table 5.5 Classification of households: study village

Lone woman	Lone man	Couple	Couple & children	Mother & children	3-generations	Horizontal extended family	Siblings (& children)	Grand-mother & grand children	Other
16.7	11.5	7.7	14.1	13.5	14.1	5.1	5.1	3.9	8.3

Source: Study village household survey.

The type of household organisation is similar to that found from interviewing the employed women who came from all over the island. What is apparent though is the number of single adult households, and in particular the number of women living alone. In the village these lone adult households were mostly of elderly people, (although some were of men who had visiting partners but who chose to live alone) who either had

had no children or whose children had left home. In many cases such people were living in poverty with very small, simple, wooden houses with no electricity or water supply. They relied on welfare support or remittances from children overseas. Invariably though these lone elderly people were supported and visited by neighbours and so they were not socially isolated.

There is a sizeable percentage of households where a couple live together with children. Some of these couples were married, some were cohabiting. They usually had at least one child in common but there were often children from the mother's previous unions. Some of the cohabiting unions were very stable with the couples having been together for some years. Others were less stable and even broke up during my 10½ month stay in the village. There are fewer of these types of household, 14.1%, in the study village than there were among the employed women, 26%. A possible explanation for this discrepancy could be that married couples with children are usually found among the professional classes and such families tend to live either in Plymouth or in the newly developing areas of Olveston or Richmond Hill, not in the outlying villages. Also there were very few people living in the village who were not Montserratian. For many of the employed women who were foreigners, marriage was their reason for coming to Montserrat.

Another notable difference between household types in the study village and those of the employed women was the number of grandmothers caring for grandchildren while their own children were overseas or working and living in Plymouth. For many of these women, their grandchildren were a real source of happiness and pride. Caring for them gave the women a sense of responsibility and importance that was apparent when they responded to the survey questions. In the study village there

were only two men raising their children alone. One had two teenage sons and was separated from his wife. The other was raising a young baby daughter as her mother had remained on another island to work. This latter case was a most unusual occurrence and while the man was respected he was also given a great deal of support and help from female neighbours, much more so than single mothers were given.

What is clear from the above classification is that once again a large number of women, a minimum of 19%, have absolute autonomy in their own household. In the three-generational and horizontally extended group women may also play an important role, indeed they may be all female households.

This classification of the study village again demonstrates the rich variety in household organisation. During my 10½ month stay in the village, to my knowledge, eight of the households changed their membership and one neighbouring household changed its structure three times due to the repeated break-up of the cohabiting union. Diagram 5.1 shows the changes that occurred in three of the households during my stay in the village. People either moved in or out of the household. The changes were often temporary and occurred due to conflicts in the household, as in Samuel's case, or because people visited from or went to other countries. Stage one shows the more permanent household arrangement and this was the form reverted to after all the visits were over. A (T) next to names indicates temporary membership or absence.

Diagram 5.1

Bertha's household: membership changes

Stage 1 Bertha
 adult son, Elroy - resident but involved in a visiting
 union, did not always sleep in the house
 adult son, Darren

Stage 2 Bertha
Elroy and Darren
Adult son, Alphonse - resident in Canada, home for a
holiday (T)

Stage 3 Bertha
Elroy
Elroy's daughter of his visiting union (T)
Darren

Samuel's household: membership changes

Stage 1 Samuel
Samuel's cohabitee, Shereene
Samuel and Shereen's son, Anderson
Shereen's son, Conrad
Shereen's parents

Stage 2 Shereene (Samuel returned home to his mother after an
argument. (T))
Anderson and Conrad
Shereen's parents

Stage 3 Samuel
Shereene
Anderson and Conrad
Shereene's father (her mother went to visit other children
in the USA. (T))

Melina's household: membership changes

Stage 1 Melina
Melina's grandmother, Mary
Melina's cousin, James

Stage 2 Melina
Melina's aunt, Clair (Mary went to stay with her daughter
Canada. (T))
James

Stage 3 Clair (T)
James (Melina went to stay with her father for the school
holidays (T))

What was striking though was that although there was a rich variety and dynamism in the household structure, household members had no difficulty in relating the present structure to me, although in some of

the larger households calculation of the number of people currently present sometimes took several attempts and involved 2 or 3 household members. Young children were equally knowledgeable about the household membership and about the nature of the relationships between members. In cases of half-siblings who shared either the same mother or father this was quite often a complicated affair but children as young as five could give me such information in considerable detail. This is in contrast to the picture presented by some early Caribbeanists who argued that household structures were so disorganised that they were confusing and disruptive for the social well-being of both adults and children (Simey:1946, Smith M.G:1962)

5.3.4 Ten Elseka households

Diagram 5.2 shows the form of ten households in the study village. The ten households were chosen because they represent the variety of household organisation in the village. They were located quite close to my own home and so I was able to establish a good rapport with at least one household member which made it much easier to carry out the household interviews. I was also able to observe things that I could not gather through direct questioning such as the nature of linkages between the households and any conflicts between members that I was not told about in the interview.

Their complexity demonstrates that the categorisation used for an analysis of a large number of households is only really useful at a general level. At the individual level a household study can become an extremely complicated affair. Diagram 5.2 shows that few households are complete units as some members move between households, as in the case of Samuel; others are directly related to members of other households, as in

the case of Vivette. The two women living with husbands and their children, Celeste and Clara, both had children from other partnerships. One woman, Alice, is raising a child that is not her own but her godchild, and Mayetta is responsible for her nieces. Only Celeste, Clara and Ruth are directly enmeshed in gender relations with their male partners in the house-hold, and Samuel is for part of the time when he cohabits with his girlfriend. For the other interviewees gender relations are experienced outside the household. Hence for the majority in this small group the household is not a site of patriarchal gender relations in any form. For the three married women, however, the household is an important site of gender relations. Furthermore, these relations are probably organised in a patriarchal fashion. This will be considered in greater detail below.

Diagram 5.2 Ten households in Elseka

Vivette's household (3)

Vivette —————> Vivette's son lives with
his paternal grandparents
Cousin, Sophia
Sophia's daughter, Zarita

Clara's household (9)

Clara
Husband, Daniel
Clara and Daniel's children;
Devron, Calvin and Garfield
Clara's children;
Louisa <—————> Father
Lennoy <- - - - -> Father
Mervyn and Elston <—————> Father

Jacob's household (13)

Jacob \longleftrightarrow Visiting girlfriend
Father
Brothers, Mark and Lewis \longleftrightarrow Visiting girlfriends
Sisters, Erica, Angela and Sonia \longleftrightarrow Visiting boyfriends and
Nieces, Eliza, Adella and Shara \longleftrightarrow children's fathers
Nephews, Leon, Dexter and Abdon \longleftrightarrow

Bertha's household (3)

Bertha
Sons, Elroy \longleftrightarrow Elroy's daughter
Darren

Ruth's household (2)

Ruth
Husband, Andrew

Samuel's household (6)

Samuel \longrightarrow Mother, brother, sister
and niece
Partner, Shereen
Samuel and Shereen's son, Anderson
Shereen's son, Conrad \longleftrightarrow Father
Shereen's parents

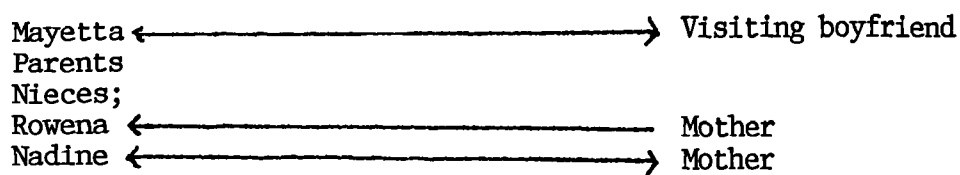
Celeste's household (7)

Celeste
Husband, James
Celeste and James's children;
Coralita, Natalia and Jesina
Celeste's daughters;
Melissa \longleftrightarrow Father
Giselle \longrightarrow Father

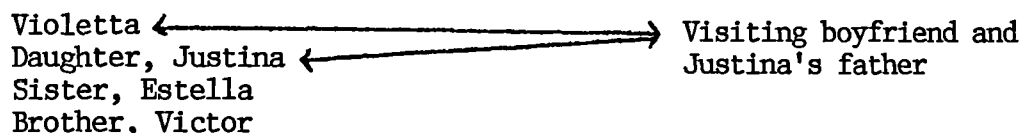
Alice's household (6)

Alice \longleftrightarrow Visiting boyfriend
Mother
Brother, Patrick and Anthony
Anthony's daughter, Susanna \longleftrightarrow Mother
Godson, Byron \longrightarrow Mother

Mayetta's household (5)



Violetta's household (4)



Note: Where there is a connection with another household, usually through children, this is demarked by an arrow and the nature of the relationship between the people is shown. The direction of the arrow also shows the direction of the household links: an arrow pointing to the left indicates movement from the study households to outside households; a two-way arrow shows that the links are maintained by members of both households; a dotted arrow is shown where the links are infrequent or no longer maintained. The number of members in the study households is shown in brackets.

5.3.5 Conclusion

What is clear from this section is the rich variety in household structures. The Montserratian household is dynamic with members moving freely between households over varying periods of time. There is apparently no ideal form of household and so their structures can be assumed to reflect the needs of the members at any one particular time. As relatively few women live with their male partner they are not exposed to patriarchal gender relations in the household but they are, nevertheless, involved in patterns of gender relations, either with other women or with male relatives. For some women the presence of a brother or father may involve them in patriarchal gender relations but not of the same form or intensity as those deriving from living with a partner.

5.4 The Household Gender Division of Labour

This section considers the gender division of labour in the household for the 100 employed women in both their households of origin and their current households and also the division in the ten detailed village interviews. It also looks at some of the time-studies carried out during the interviews with the employed women which demonstrates the way women have to juggle their paid employment and domestic responsibilities. There is also a brief mention of children's attitudes towards responsibilities for household labour as gathered through the children's questionnaires. As stated in Chapter II, the gender division of labour is part of the material structure of patriarchy. It reflects who gets what out of who. It is therefore an important area to study in an investigation of the gender relations in the household.

First it is important to say something about the nature of housework in the Caribbean. The most time-consuming task is cooking. While most women now have gas cookers, either with four or two rings, as opposed to 'coal pots' (charcoal-burning fires enclosed in cast-iron casing) cooking remains a very lengthy process. Most vegetables consumed, (banana tyre, dasheen, breadfruit, sweet potatoes, green paw-paw), need lengthy preparation and/or cooking times. Meat tends to be of poor quality and needs slow cooking. All meat and fish is seasoned in Caribbean cooking, often needing preparation the night before or early in the morning. Only the wealthier women could afford processed, packaged foods, and then only infrequently. For most women cooking is a laborious and time-consuming task and has to be done every day, either at lunch-time or, most commonly, in the evening. Cleaning involves sweeping and dusting daily as most homes have open shutters rather than glass windows

and so much dust blows inside. Washing is another strenuous and time-consuming job as, with very few exceptions, it is done by hand in buckets or stone troughs and in cold water. Caribbean dress standards require carefully pressed clothes and so clothing is always ironed, often twice, once after drying and once just before wearing. Shopping may be done locally on a daily basis or in the form of a large weekly shop in the supermarkets in town. Without a car, shopping involves a considerable struggle on and off the small mini-buses that return the women home to their villages. Yard duties involve the sweeping of the bare earth patch immediately next to the house and a general maintenance of the area. If the household has any livestock, usually goats, these are taken out each morning and tethered in pasture and brought back to the yard in the evening. Any other ground the household may possess may be farmed for vegetables and may entail a walk of some distance, as well as rather strenuous gardening activities. The latter three tasks are known collectively as 'outside work'. It is apparent therefore that household duties in the Caribbean, while carried out in houses much smaller in size than those in the West, are nevertheless extremely time-consuming and laborious ³.

5.4.1 The household gender division of labour: households of origin

During the interview, in the section about the household of origin, the women were asked; "Who did most of the housework?" Table 5.6 shows their responses. The percentages are calculated from a total of 71 as 29 women did not answer the question.

Table 5.6 Gender division of labour in households of origin

women only	shared	women & daughters	women & children	maids	no answer
18.3	7.1	33.8	39.4	1.4	(29)

Source: Interviews with employed women

In only 7.1% of homes were duties shared, that is male adults helped with the housework. In 42.1% of the households the responsibility for maintaining the household fell on the women alone or on the women and their daughters as explained in the following interviews;

Interview 19:

"My sisters and my mother and me, my brothers didn't do very much."

Interview 37:

"My mother for the most part and me because I was the only girl. The boys just did their room."

Interview 59:

"My bigger sister, we helped as we grew up. My brother didn't help because he was the pet, he was the only brother so we did for him."

However, in 39.4% of homes while the male adults did not help, male children were taught how to do housework and were expected to help. The following quotes explain the mother's reasoning behind encouraging sons to help.

Interview 12:

"All of us. Mother taught them because if they happen to leave the house then they can do their own work."

Interview 33:

"We shared it, my mother went out to work and there were certain duties we were supposed to perform in the mornings and in the afternoons after school, my brother too."

Interview 70:

"I was the first so I had to do all the work with my mother, as my brothers and sisters grew up they helped. My mother trained the boys and the girls to do the same sort of work, 'cause she said when you grow up and go out is not all the time you just drop into married life, you got to do something for yourself. So she will train the boys to wash and cook, just like the girls."

However, while some women did expect sons to help as much as girls, most boys would only do 'outside work', while the girls would carry out the more time-consuming tasks inside the home. What is clear though is the help that many women got from their children and the early training of children to help. In many homes children of ten years or even younger contributed more to the daily household upkeep than any adult males present. This demonstrates that with males present in the household the pattern of gender relations dictated that women did housework and generally serviced men. It is therefore evident that patriarchal gender relations were at play.

5.4.2 The household gender division of labour: current households

Table 5.7 shows the breakdown by household type of those doing particular household tasks for the majority of the time⁴. Considering each in turn, we find that 85 of the women carry out the task of cooking alone. Only in 15 cases is it shared with an adult male, eight of which are male partners and four are brothers. In most cases the women stated that the men would help but this help is only really forthcoming when the woman is ill or has to spend some time away from the household. Even in the few cases where women said that it was a shared task they admitted, on further questioning, that the men would only help once or twice a week at the most. Fathers of the women prove to be the least helpful where cooking is concerned. In seven cases the women are helped by the children but it is not a task carried out exclusively by the children.

Cleaning presents a similar picture although here 14 women have the help of a domestic employee, (always female), and in 11 of these cases the cleaning is done exclusively by these women. Only 13 women said that male household members would help with the cleaning, although 16

women were helped by their children. The pattern for the washing and ironing of clothes is similar to the latter. In 79 cases women carry out the task, although 17 are helped by their children and 10 by the domestic. It is a shared task in only 13 cases and this is most usually the pattern where there are male adult siblings who will wash and iron their own clothes. One child and seven domestics do the task exclusively.

Washing up is a task which children frequently carry out exclusively and is a job they are taught to do at quite an early stage. In 25 cases children perform this task alone on a regular basis and 66 women are responsible for it, although 11 of them are helped by either the child or a domestic. It is only shared in eight cases and is therefore a task which children perform more than do adult males in households. Shopping is carried out exclusively by the women alone in 81 of the households but is shared in 19 cases. Through observation in the two supermarkets on the island it became clear that this so-called 'sharing' actually meant many men driving the women into town and collecting them later when they had finished the shopping. Very few men were to be seen pushing a shopping trolley around the supermarkets.

Only 90 households had any yard. Yard duties are usually described as 'male tasks' however I found that 34 of the women were solely responsible for the maintenance of the yard, although five were helped by their children. In 11 households the task was a shared one and in 23 cases it was carried out exclusively by the men of the household. Eight women said that they would employ someone to come and cut the grass in the yard, always a man. It would appear then that even in the case of traditionally male areas of responsibility women are still actively involved, often more so than the men in their household. A similar pattern emerges for working with the livestock and doing any farming. In

the 56 households that do such work, 15 women and 19 men do it exclusively and it is shared in 18 cases.

The paying of household bills, which are usually the monthly water, electricity and possibly telephone bills, (very few households have to pay rent and gas tanks tend to last for about six months) is the most equally shared task with 48 women stating that the bills are paid by all working adult men and women in the household. In only 10 cases do the men pay all the bills from their own salaries. Despite this being the most shared task 42 women still pay all the bills themselves. It is clear therefore that when women have paid employment they are expected to contribute financially to the household but the same expectations are not made of the men as far as household labour is concerned.

Childcare for young children was necessary in only 32 of the households. It is the responsibility of 23 of the women; four of them are helped by an employed domestic/ childminder. Childcare is shared in just nine cases. An interesting point that emerged was that boyfriends and husbands seem to help in the home more if the couple live together without any children. It appears that once children are part of the household the male partner withdraws his help and the children are expected to make a labour contribution from an early age. For example in the case of interview 49 when she and her husband were cohabiting he would often bring home food and cook her a meal. In fact the sharing of their household duties was one of the reasons he stated for wanting to live together. He said that if they cooked and ate together then they would have more time together, that if they shared the rent they could save money. Since their marriage and the birth of their first child he has done very little in

Table 5.7 Household gender division of labour by household type

Household Type & no. of house- holds	Cooking	Cleaning	Washing/ ironing	Washing up	Shopping	Yard duties	Livestock	Paying bills	Childcare
	f m s c	f m s c d	f m s c d	f m s c d	f m s c	f m s c d	f m s c d	f m s c	f m s d
1 (5)	3 - 2 -	1 - 3 - 1	2 - 2 - 1	2 - 3 - -	1 - 4 -	1 2 2 - -	- 1 1 - -	- - 5 -	- - - -
2 (26)	20 - 6 2	18 - 3 5 8	21 - 1 5 7	11 - 5 12 2	16 - 10 -	2 11 3 7 3	2 11 5 1 2	1 7 18 -	8 - 6 4
3 (13)	13 - - 3	11 - - 6 2	12 - - 5 1	11 - - 7 -	13 - - 2	6 - - 5 1	2 - - 2 1	13 - - 1	1 - - -
4 (12)	12 - - -	11 - - - 1	11 - - 1 -	9 - - 4 -	12 - - -	5 2 2 3 -	2 1 5 1 -	5 - 7 -	4 - - -
5 (18)	18 - - 1	17 - - 2 1	17 - - 2 1	16 - - 3 -	18 - - -	9 - - 1 4	6 - - 2 -	18 - - -	4 - - -
6 (4)	- - 4 -	2 - 2 1 -	2 - 2 1 -	1 - - 3 -	2 - 2 -	1 1 2 - -	- 1 1 - -	- - 4 -	1 - 2 -
7 (4)	2 - 2 -	2 - 2 - -	1 - 3 - -	2 - - 2 -	4 - - -	2 1 1 - -	- - 3 - -	- - 4 -	2 - - -
8 (14)	13 - 1 -	10 - 3 1 1	10 - 4 2 -	1 - - 3 -	11 - 3 -	6 5 1 3 -	3 5 3 - -	1 3 10 -	3 - 1 -
9 (4)	4 - - 1	4 - - 1 -	3 - 1 1 -	3 - - 1 -	4 - - -	2 1 - - -	- - - - -	4 - - -	- - - -
Totals of those who do the work exclusively, without help from any other category									
	f s	f s d	f s c d	f s c d	f s	f m s c d	f m s c d	f m s	f s
	85 15	76 13 11	79 13 1 7	66 8 25 1	81 19	34 23 11 14 8	15 19 18 2 2 42	10 48	23 9

Note: Household types categorised according to who the interviewee lives with; 1-male partner, 2-male partner & children, 3-children, 4-mother & children, 5-female adults & children, 6-siblings, 7-maternal relatives & children, 8-parents, 9-other

Categories of household members doing housework; f-female, m-male, s-shared between men and women, c-children, d-domestic⁴

Source: Interviews with employed women

the home and devotes more of his time to his work and his friends. Some women felt that once they had children the men were not so interested in helping or spending time with them (Interview 24).

I would argue that this pronounced and imbalanced division of labour by gender in the household is a clear indication of the patriarchal gender relations that exist for the 69 women who share their homes with adult men, either as husbands, boyfriends, brothers, fathers or uncles. These women have full-time employment and they have to maintain their households; they are therefore bearing the burden of a dual-role. Their financial independence has not given them independence within their household when it is shared with any adult males as far as domestic duties are concerned. However during the course of the interviews very few women complained about such an unequal gender division of labour. Perhaps this was because most felt it was their duty as a woman and a mother. Such women may have been strongly socialised into their expected gender role. Even though their burden of work has been increased by their own employment they have, as yet, failed to challenge gender roles in the home. Below are some typical responses to the question; "Do you mind that the men in the house do not help you at all?"

Interview 49:

"I don't ask him to help. He works at the airport and he also has another business so he's very busy dealing with that."

Interview 99:

"No I don't mind we girls doing all the housework."

Other women were less happy;

Interview 55:

"Yes I mind doing it all but they won't do anything at all."

Interview 93:

"It upsets me a lot. I have to come here to work, sometimes I work

late in the evening, then I go home and meet a dirty kitchen, and you have to clean it and cook. I feel mad about having to work so hard and then come home and have to work hard again. Plus when you cook they benefit because they eat as well, I don't feel happy about it at all."

For some women the responsibilities of having a full-time job, maintaining a household and in some cases organising childcare for pre-school children requires a tightly organised day. Eighty of the women interviewed (not the workers at Johnson's) were asked for a description of how they would spend their time on a typical week-day. Below are some examples which demonstrate how carefully women juggle their time in order to meet all their responsibilities. Interviewee number 3 has divorced her husband; interviewee 59 is married with three children.

Interview 3:

"I get up around 5.30am, on my early mornings. I get porridge ready for my son and get his flask ready, pack his bag ready to take him to the baby-sitter, dress him and then get myself ready. My daughter gets herself ready. I don't eat breakfast, just tea and she does that. Then I take my son to the babysitter, a bus picks us all up and drops us off. He comes at 8.00, I should start work at 8.00 but I'm always late. I finish at 4.00. The bus picks me up and I pick my son up. My daughter meets me here after school and we catch the bus home together. She finishes at 3.00. She also comes in here with me in the morning until it is time to go to school. The bus picks me up and then on the way we pick my son up. Then when I get home I have to think about cooking and cleaning and washing the child's clothes."

Interview 59:

"I get up about 5.30. First of all I do my devotions and go and make tea for my husband. He has to leave for work at 6am. Then I start to get the kids lunch packs and make the breakfast. Then I get them ready for school, that may take up until about 7am, I get myself ready. Sometimes I'll do a little cooking before I leave, but not always. I leave home at 7.30 and I catch a bus here. I arrive at work about 7.55 or 8.00, I finish at 4.00. As we are on piece work sometimes I weave in my lunch hour. Sometimes I don't work if I don't feel like it. I catch the bus home, I get home between 4.30 and 5.00. When I get home I wash, look after the dinner, finish it up, rest, watch TV, I have a bath and sometimes I go to church. I go to bed around 8.30/9.00."

5.4.3 The household gender division of labour: village households

Clara is married and has 7 children. Only 1 child, her daughter,

is employed. As her daughter is at work Clara has taught her two eldest sons to do the housework while she herself is out working as a domestic. They will do most of the housework. She states;

"Well I try and teach them some things so that when they become big and they live on their own they will know what to do."

Clara's husband also helps;

"Sometimes, he cooks sometimes and helps with the washing. Some times if he's around and he sees I'm busy he helps me with what I am doing."

However she does not feel that her husband is typical of most Montserratian men;

"Not all of them help so, some of them see their wives dying with the work and they don't help them. They don't care."

Jacob has his own room below a large shared house with about 13 people living in it. He is responsible for maintaining that room and for his own washing and ironing. In response to the question:"In this house, who does most of the housework?" he replied;

"Well, the woman take part of certain things and the man take part of certain things. I do all my own washing because me alone, you see, I live by myself so that you could say that I live in my own little apartment, so whatever I can do for myself I do it."

However, a question about whether he ever helped with the cooking or washing up amused him greatly and he said that he never did such work.

When Samuel cohabits with his girlfriend it is her and her mother who do the housework. However he does help with some of the tasks such as washing and caring for their son. When he lives at home he does not help at all but leaves it all to his sister and mother, even though they are both in full-time employment.

Celeste has growing daughters and a husband. Her eldest daughter helps her with the cleaning and washing. The other girls will run errands, take the goats out to pasture and do the washing up. Celeste

works full-time and still bears the full burden of the housework. Her husband also works full-time but frequently has the afternoons off. He will never help her. I asked her if she were to have sons whether she would teach them how to do housework. She responded by saying;

"Yes I would, in my case I would have taught my sons to do the housework because, for instance, lets say, my husband is home, he didn't go to work today or he came back up early, he will never say, "well, Celeste is at work, I'll put on the dinner until she comes." What he will do, he will lie down and when I come now he will see the hour that he should have eaten gone and he gets vex. Whereas it should be between us both, like if I'm not home early and you come before you should be able to help with the cooking. So I see where that was lacking in his parents exempting him from the kitchen so he depends on a woman to do everything for him. So I will train my sons to be in the kitchen too, if I have sons."

In Alice's case the lazy male is not her partner but her two adult brothers. Asked the same question as Celeste, she responded with;

"I always make noise with my mother for that, because I have two brothers here and they can't do a thing, Tracey, not even their under-pants they can wash. And I always curse her because I have all the work to do and they don't help me do anything, not even to cut the yard. Sometimes I have to go down the street and ask a friend, sometimes I even curse them and say well I don't know what the friends and them feel because I have two men in the house and they don't help me do anything. So I think they should be taught to do something and whenever I have my children, whether it be male or female, they have to learn to do something."

Violetta lives with her brother and sister. Her brother is responsible for his own washing and ironing but she and her sister have to do all the cooking and other household duties. While she said that she found this irritating she felt that there was nothing she could do about it.

Ruth has been largely responsible for the housework with little help from her husband early in their married life but now they share many more duties. He generally does the cleaning and helps with the washing but he still will not cook. This finding is similar to that mentioned by R.T.Smith (1988:136) in that the gender division of labour lessens as the

couple grow older.

In this small sample of interviews the general pattern of women having to perform almost all the household tasks alone is repeated. What is different in these cases is that the women were more likely to complain about this state of affairs and while they may blame the men's mothers for not training them to do anything, there is also the underlying feeling that even if the men knew what to do they still would not help. For example, at one of meetings of the sewing club in the study village, Doretta said she had to leave early because she had to cook before her boyfriend came home. The other women teased her saying that he was a big boy now and he should learn to cook for himself and leave her to spend some time with her friends. She replied;

"Him could cook you know, when he lived on his own he used to cook good, cook me nice chicken and so. Now that we are together he can't be doing with it, he say now he have a woman to do it he can have a rest too. Thing is maybe I want a rest!"

The women then asked me if I had to cook for Linton. I told them that I did sometimes but usually he did it for me and that when I went home that night my dinner would be ready for me. They congratulated me on being able to get a Montserratian man to cook for me and asked if he would come and cook for them! What is encouraging though is that they felt that they would make sure that their sons were able to look after themselves in the home.

5.4.4 Children's ideas about housework

Fifty children, aged 12 to 16, completed a questionnaire which, among other things, asked them; "Do you think that men and boys should do housework?" Tables 5.8 and 5.9 show their responses.

Of the 16 boys who completed the questionnaire and the 34 girls,

81.3% of boys and 76.5% of girls felt that men and boys should do housework. The main reasons for this answer were: so that they could look after themselves, so that they could help the women and the girls, and because they make a mess too. Only 18.7% of the boys and 8.8% of the girls felt that men and boys should not do housework and the reason for this was because they saw it as women's work

Table 5.8 Whether men and boys should do housework

No.children	yes	no	don't know	no answer	total
boys (16)	81.3	18.7	-	-	16
girls (34)	76.5	8.8	11.8	2.9	34

Table 5.9 Reasons for the above responses

No.children	they have to look after themselves	they make a mess too	to help the women	it is women's work	to learn respons- ibility	to show they will be good to marry
boys (14)	35.7	-	28.6	21.4	-	14.3
girls (26) (1 girl gave 2 responses)	44.4	7.4	29.7	11.1	7.4	-

Source: Children's questionnaires.

It appears therefore that the future generation of adults have a different attitude to household responsibilities than do the adult men of the current generation. This could be because as more women have gone into paid employment, boys as well as girls have been expected to help in the home or because fewer of this generation's children have had a man in the home to act as a role model of a man doing nothing to help. Whether the boys would help with housework as they form a residential union and

whether the girls would continue to expect a helpful partner is of course another matter.

5.4.5 Conclusion

It is clear, therefore, that women bear the greatest responsibility for all the housework, despite the fact that they are also engaged in full-time employment. While there are some men who do give a considerable amount of help they are very much in the minority. Some women are unhappy about the situation and seem determined to make sure that they socialise their sons into a different pattern of behaviour. The results from the children's questionnaires indicates that this seems to have happened. At present though a consideration of the household division of labour reveals a pattern indicative of patriarchal gender relations at work in the households where there are adult males present.

5.5 Decision-Making Patterns in the Household

This section will consider the gender relations involved in the process of making decisions relating to the household. Decision-making is taken to include: any decisions made about household affairs, in particular financial decisions; decisions about the bringing up of children; and decisions about any social activities members of the household may wish to do. It considers the data from the interviews with employed women first and then the ten village interviews.

5.5.1 Decision-making: employed women

As has been stated above, where the woman is the sole adult member of her household she clearly has absolute autonomy in her decision-making. Where she shares her household with other women then those women

will jointly share decisions. The women indicated that in households with other relatives, including male relatives, they were involved in decision-making and had autonomy as far as their own lives were concerned. Where they lived with their fathers, they may not be actively consulted on all household matters but where it involved financial decisions they would be included in the discussions. In such homes the battle over decision-making is usually between the parents and the interviewee may not be actively involved in such debates. When asked about who had more power and control in her home, this respondent, who lives with her parents, 2 brothers and 2 sisters, answered thus;

Interview 25:

"In the home? Sometimes I wonder, I would say the father you know, but sometimes my mother gets around to getting her own way. Like my brother, he will say he's going to club and mummy will say, 'you are not going unless you clean the yard.' Then he ask daddy and he will say he can go, then mummy will say, 'and where do you think you are going?' and he will have to come back and sit down. Daddy will say, 'ain't I tell you you could go?' and mummy will say, 'clean the yard!' and daddy has to listen to mummy. I think it's more equal, I think it should be anyway, I don't think the father should be the boss, it should be equal, you give and take orders."

Of the 27 women who were asked about the power relationships between them and their male partner who they lived with only 14 felt that they had an equal relationship. For example;

Interview 39:

"I think it's a very even relationship as we tend to make decisions together. We've never had a problem about one of us wanting to do something and the other stopping us. If I wanted to do something really badly he will try and see my side."

Interview 45:

"I think we are equal, we both compromise."

For the other women their comments ranged from thinking that they were more in control, to an acceptance that the man is the head of the home, to complaints about his behaviour, through to a complete rejection of the domineering attitude of the man which may break-up the union.

Below are some examples of these responses;

Interview 70:

"Well me really, because the house is definitely mine, the land and the first building was my grandmother's. I say what goes really."

Interview 83:

"Well, as the Bible say, the husband is the head of the home. I figure sometimes it's equal, but I figure sometimes one is more powerful than the other. He makes most decisions but I help him."

Interview 84:

"Well I believe he thinks he's more important, sometimes I have to agree because he's the head of the house."

Interview 53:

"I think I compromise much more than he does."

Interview 24:

"Well I don't think he's taking advantage of me because I'm not going to let him do that. He does not always assist with...like say, staying at home with the kids. If I want to go out tonight, I am the one who's going to worry about the kids and what I am going to do. If he wants to go out, he just puts on his clothes and goes and doesn't have to worry about the kids. I always tell him, 'when I want to go out I shouldn't have to worry about the kids, you don't have to worry about them, when you are ready you just put on your clothes and go and you think, well she is there, well I should be able to say the same, he is there so I don't have to worry.' I don't think he's supportive enough, but like running the house and that sort of thing it's equal."

I conclude from this that while many women stated that they took equal part in the decision-making concerning the household a number of women clearly felt that they did not have such equality. In some of the interviews I found that women who had said that they had an equal relationship actually did not when they responded to other parts of the interview. For example, interviewee 70 said that she had most power because the house where she and her boyfriend lived was hers. However, later in the interview she said that her boyfriend did very little in the home, leaving all the housework to her. He contributed less to the home in financial terms than she did and he had another girlfriend who he went to visit while she was working night-shift at her place of work. She has tried but failed to stop him seeing this other woman. I would argue that

the only real power she has is that she could legally throw him out of her house rather than fear him throwing her out. It is important to remember therefore, that what some women may call equality is often not so.

During the interviews I found a certain degree of reluctance on the part of the women to complain about their male partners, despite the fact that many cited examples of inequality in their relationships. Many women seemed to feel that it was their lot in life to tolerate inequality as part of a residential union with a man. However as the marriage rate falls and the divorce rate rises in Montserrat it appears that fewer women are willing to accept the patriarchal gender relations that may develop within a residential union with a male partner.

5.5.2 Decision-making: village households

Clara has been married to her husband for 12 years. When asked about making decisions in the household she explained that in some cases she would have to be a little devious and go ahead and do something without asking him. This was usually the case where she felt that the household needed something but that he would not agree to it. Moses (1977) found women used similar tactics in her own study of Montserratian women. Clara explained it in this way;

"Well sometimes, sometimes you have to talk to them about some things of taking care of the home, but other times you can't bring certain talk to them because some of them they don't want to agree, they don't want you to have that, and after some time it's best not to talk about it. They don't have much interest in the home and the woman, they just eat and put on their clothes and they are gone, but the woman is the wife in the home and have more interest in the home than some of the husbands. Sometimes I know I have money to buy things and don't tell him I have money to buy something because probably he might have something to say about it. I know it's to try and invest it to make it look better in the home, but he's going to say things, so to shorten the talk I just go ahead and buy it. It's necessary to say something to him sometimes but not all the time."

In Celeste's case her response identified direct control over her own life, in particular her social activities. Her husband wanted to control and restrict her leisure time;

"In certain aspects we do understand each other, but, like when he's moody, if, for instance, I say I'm going at a friends he might object and tell me I'm not going any place, let me stay home. If I pursue it and get headstrong and say I'm going usually we end up in a quarrel. So I prefer to understand, go with what he say to keep down things, because many a time we women have to subject under the men, just to keep things down. So presently we have an understanding."

However that understanding does not restrict her husband in any way and if he chooses to go out he will go and there is nothing she can say that will stop him. Her husband is also very much in control of the household finances. She did not know how much he earnt although he knew the exact amount of her own income.

In an argument that occurred after the interview had taken place Celeste's husband accused her of keeping back some housekeeping money in order to save money for her air-fare to another island where her family still live and who she had not seen for 14 years. She denied that she was doing this but he insisted on doing the shopping himself and he kept all non-perishable goods locked in the boot of his car, only giving her the food when it was necessary. This is quite an extreme example of control, but his control of her time appears to be quite common as it was a frequent complaint of women about their partners.

Ruth felt that she and her husband had an understanding relationship and said that they now made their decisions together. In the past she felt that she had done her duty as a wife, always taken care of the home rather than going out to gossip, "I'm not a newsy person going out on the road," and consequently her husband respected her and had treated her fairly.

The three married women therefore demonstrate different patterns of gender relations. In Ruth and Clara's case they felt that on the whole their marriages were fairly equal but that was mainly because they knew their duty as a wife and they carried it out, or that they had found ways of circumventing their partner's attempt at control. One wonders how understanding these husbands would be if their wives were not so accepting of such a passive role. In Celeste's case, while she tried hard to be a good wife and mother, her husband continually asserted his marital right, as he interpreted it, to control all aspects of his wife's life. Celeste is firmly enmeshed in a web of patriarchal gender relations.

5.6 Household Networks

While these have been identified in Chapter III as an important aspect of Caribbean household organisation the time available for the interviews with the employed women did not allow for the investigation of this issue. Some evidence about links between households did emerge during questions about childcare and so will be dealt with in Chapter VIII.

The evidence gathered about household networks was done through participant observation in the study village. The networks seemed primarily to come into play in connection with two things: the care of children and at times of stress between men and women in residential unions. In some cases these two needs overlapped.

In the case of childcare the linkages between households were due to a child or children being cared for by someone who was not their parent.

Gerraldine has six children but very little financial means to support them. An elderly female neighbour informally adopted her eldest son to keep her company and to relieve some of the pressure on Gerraldine. The son frequently visited his mother and his brothers and sisters visited him where he lived; the links between the two households were strong. Alice was not happy with the way her godson was being raised and she has informally adopted him, however he still sees his mother and grandparents. His younger half-brother often joins him at Alice's and the links between the two households are maintained largely through the children's interaction. Mayetta has a sister living in the village who was financially less secure than Mayetta and her parents. While two children lived with the sister her third child 'voted with her feet' and chose to live in the increased comfort of Mayetta's home. The girl saw her mother daily and her brother and sister often joined her in Mayetta's home. Other linkages between households occurred due to less permanent child-care. Violetta had strong links with a lone elderly woman who cared for her baby daughter while Violetta was at work. As well as payment for the care she often gave the woman gifts of food and provided company for an hour or so on some afternoons when she went to pick her daughter up.

When couples had disagreements and/or parted temporarily then household links became important. Whenever Samuel felt that his girlfriend was getting too possessive and jealous he would return to his mother's house in a neighbouring village. He would then wait until a reconciliation was established, usually through his sister. Upon his partner's promise not to nag him he would then return, but his behaviour towards other women which had caused the initial disagreement did not seem to change.

During my stay in the village a cohabiting couple, Merrill and

Tobias, parted twice. In the first case Merrill disappeared for two weeks after an aggressive argument. Tobias struggled to care for the children who were at school and nursery, but clearly found it difficult. While they slept at home, their paternal grandmother, who also lived in the village, prepared their meals. Merrill then returned and the family resumed normal relations. Two months later, after a brutal fight in which Tobias forced Merrill to admit to an infidelity, Merrill left with her daughter and returned to her mother's house in another village. The son moved in with his paternal grandmother who also resumed preparing meals for her son although he still slept at home or with his 'outside girlfriend'. Merrill was not seen in the village for over a month and she did not see her son. However, Tobias was keen to encourage her to return and built an extra room onto their small wooden house. At the time of my departure Merrill was deciding about making a full return and was staying with Tobias for one or two nights a week, but without the children. The household networks involving both maternal and paternal grandparents were very important to Merrill in the face of her sometimes violent cohabitee. One offered her a place of refuge and the other a place for her son to stay in her absence.

In cases of household stress and discord between men and women, other households become a place of safety and/or a place of care for any children. In this respect household networks play an important part in providing some security and support for women who are involved in a pattern of patriarchal gender relations where violence may be used to make sure that they conform to such a form of gender relations.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that there is considerable variety in the structure of households in Montserrat. Alongside the variety in structures there is a dynamism that means household membership is fluid. The variety of household forms means that there is little social censure of the types which allow women to be strongly independent. This appears to be in contrast to some other Caribbean countries. One employed woman had moved to Montserrat from Guyana for employment but she also gave another reason;

Interview 11:

"I came here because of the economic system in Guyana, the political system more or less...you know it's very very hard to be a single independent woman in Guyana and that's what I want to be...It's not very safe for a young girl to live alone, because of the guys and the rapes, we have a lot of thieves and burglars and so it's not very safe for young girls to live alone in Guyana...So that is more or less the toughest part of the situation. It's so much safer here."

A consideration of the household gender division of labour revealed that women are predominantly responsible for the maintenance of the household. They receive help from their children, who in fact often do more than any adult males. As few women live in a household with their male partner, many women have a lot of autonomy in their household decision-making. Even where they share their home with male relatives they are involved in decision-making, especially if they make a financial contribution. Some women who lived with their partners felt that they had an equal role in decision-making but from other responses throughout the interview it became clear that in fact they did not. Household networks were identified as an important source of support for women, either in the form of childcare or as places of refuge at times of conflict.

Since a large percentage of women are not living in households with adult males, the household per se is not a site of patriarchal gender relations. However, for those women living with men it is such a site, as demonstrated by the data on the household division of labour and decision-making patterns. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that for those women who live with men with whom they have a sexual relation (and especially if they have children,) the gender relations are even more patriarchal. It is as if once a wife and mother, the woman has to conform to a particular role which includes 'servicing' the male. While the woman is a lover then this servicing role is not there, nor is there so much pressure or expectation on the part of the man for 'everything to be done for him'. Patriarchal gender relations are experienced only by women who are married or cohabit with their partner. There is some evidence that the intensity of the patriarchal nature of these relations is mediated slightly as the couple grow older together. This was demonstrated in Ruth's case. Hence, for the majority of Montserratian women their household is a site of independence and autonomy and not of patriarchal gender relations.

CHAPTER VI
WOMEN AND MEN AT WORK:
GENDER RELATIONS IN MONTSERRATIAN EMPLOYMENT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the nature of gender relations in employment. The focus is on the nature of women's employment, the problems they face as workers and perceptions about women's employment. It begins with a brief discussion of data sources which form the basis of the findings. It then looks at the data relating to the workplace in the 1980-1981 Caricom census for Montserrat. The nature of employment opportunities for Montserratian women will be investigated. Following on from this there will be an assessment of the Montserratian gender division of labour in the workplace. Women's ideas and thoughts about their own employment and employers' attitudes about employing women will form the next two sections. The final parts of the chapter will consider the problems women face as employees: what men feel about women working and what effect, if any, women's employment has on the personal relations in which they are involved. (Each aspect of women's employment will be analysed in relation to the effect it has on the nature of gender relations in the workplace).

6.2 The Montserratian Economy, Data Sources and Sample Selection

Data for this chapter is derived from the 1980-1981 population census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Montserrat, volume 3. This is supplemented by interviews with employers and legislators, one hundred employed women, and fifty children's questionnaires. First let us consider briefly the Montserratian economy.

The Montserratian Government's central political belief regarding economic development and growth has been that the private sector is, and must remain, the main generator of investment and growth. Another main

aim is to reduce its dependence on external grants and loans (Montserrat Development Plan:1985).

In 1985 services, which include tourism, contributed 47% to the GDP, followed by construction (9%) and manufacturing (9%). Agriculture is the fourth largest contributor at 4.5%. Construction and mining and quarrying (the latter contributes 1.3% of GDP) were the fastest growing sectors, increasing by 15.1% and 11.4% respectively. Tourism has been the main source of foreign exchange, but it has also had the negative effect of stimulating a high level of consumption. The change in consumption patterns has forced a rise in food imports and consumer durables (Ibid).

Manufacturing is on a small scale producing electronic components, garments and textiles, leather goods and plastic bags. These manufactured goods accounted for 72.6% of Montserrat's exports in 1982. The next largest export category (14.8%) was 'crude materials' which were mostly quarrying products such as sand and gravel. Machinery and transport equipment, food, beverages and tobacco accounted for the remaining 12.6% (Montserrat Ninth Statistical Digest:1984).

The largest import into Montserrat in 1982 was manufactured goods, consumer durables, which accounted for 28.5% of all imports. Machinery and transport equipment, mostly cars for the private market, accounted for 22.6%. Linked to the increased consumption stimulated by tourism are the high rates of food imports which accounted for 18% of imports. The next largest import is fuels, mainly oil products for the oil-fired electricity plant (10.7%). Chemical, beverages, crude materials accounted for the remaining 20.2% (Ibid).

There are no large scale multinational corporations (MNCs) on Montserrat although there are a few small scale operations which have been started by individual business people who may also have one or two

operations in the USA or Canada (Datapress). However they are not MNCs. There are numerous off-shore banks operating from the island¹.

The main problem with gathering data was the time constraint in interviewing the employed women. Many women were working on piece rates, and while some employers agreed to pay them for the lost time it meant that the time for the interviews was limited to 20 minutes or at the most half an hour. Therefore, it was not always possible to probe into certain areas as much as I would have liked. In addition, as the interviews were carried out in the workplace, in a few cases it was hard to find somewhere private and quiet to conduct the interviews. However, due to the general openness and friendliness of the women concerned this was not as big a problem as I had initially feared. It must also be said that, where possible, employers were very accommodating, moving out of their own offices in three cases.

The sampling procedure for selecting women was not always as rigorous as I had hoped. Few employers kept formal and up-to-date records of their employees and so an assortment of selection methods was used. In some cases the women were selected for me by the supervisors, or the women were asked to volunteer. Yet, as the profiles in Chapter IV show, a good cross-section of women was interviewed and they are fairly representative of the structure of the female workforce.

Income figures are all presented in \$EC (Eastern Caribbean Dollars). At the time of the research the exchange rate was almost \$4 to £1. A weekly wage of \$100 was equivalent to about £25-30.

6.3 Montserratian Employment: An Increasingly Female Labour Force, But A Segregated Labour Force

The data presented in table form in this section of the chapter is taken from the '1980-1981 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Montserrat, Volume 3'.

Table 6.1 shows the rates of economic activity during the year before the census² ('economically active' includes all those who worked, had a job but were not working, who had looked for work or wanted work and were available.) It presents the percentages for men and women.

Table 6.1 **Economic activity rates for men and women, 1970 and 1980**

	Males		Females	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Economically active	85.2	78.6	38.8	49.7
Worked	80.4	72.7	34.3	42.3
Seeking first job	1.4	2.2	1.7	2.3
Others seeking work	1.2	1.6	1.0	2.4
Wanted work & available	2.2	2.2	1.8	2.7
Economically inactive	12.2	17.1	59.6	46.4
Home duties	0.7	1.2	44.4	27.6
Student	0.8	2.0	0.8	0.9
Retired	10.7	7.7	14.4	7.5
Disabled	0.0	6.1	0.0	10.4
Other/not stated	2.5	4.4	1.6	3.9
Total (actual numbers)	2996	3603	3699	3966

Source: Caricom Census 1980-1981, Montserrat, volume 3, pp. 14.

Clearly, there has been an increase in the economically active population, from 59.6%, in 1970, to 63.4% in 1980; an absolute overall increase of 4%. This increase in economic activity reflects exclusively the increased activity rates of women. We can see that the percentage of

women who are economically active has risen by over 10% (from 38.8% to 49.7%), whereas the male rate has fallen by 6% (from 85.2% to 78.6%). Looking at the breakdown of the 'economically active' figure we see that there was an 8% increase in the number of women who worked and that more women stated that they were actively seeking work.

The number of men who stated that they were economically inactive in the years 1970 and 1980 has risen by 5%, whereas the number of women in the same category has declined by 13%. In particular the number of women who said that they were involved in home duties declined by 16.8%. However, the overall rate for economically inactive women still remains much higher than for men.

Table 6.2 shows the horizontal segregation of the workforce in both 1970 and 1980 (figures shown are percentages)³. As there is a large number of people in the 'not stated/not applicable' category these figures were not used in the percentage calculations. Some of the categories used were not the same in each year. For example, the categories, 'Transport and Communications' and 'Labourers etc' were used in 1970 but not in 1980.

The table demonstrates that the occupational distribution of men and women is quite different. Almost 50% of the economically active men work in 'production and production related activities', whereas this occupational group only employs 12% of the active women. The category 'production and related' includes all activities related to construction, one of the biggest industries on the island. From 1980 this category also included transport and communication workers. Where women are employed in this category it means that they are employed in manufacturing type jobs, eg. electronic components. Male workers are also concentrated in agriculture and related jobs which accounted for 17.5% in 1980. These two

categories alone account for 67.2% of the male workforce. The remaining 32.8% are distributed fairly evenly throughout the other sectors.

Table 6.2 **Horizontal segregation of the workforce**

Occupational group	Males Percent		Females Percent	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Professional and Technical	6.8	8.1	14.3	15.0
Administrative and Managerial	1.6	3.6	0.9	2.0
Clerical	4.3	6.1	13.0	23.7
Transport and Communications	1.0	0.0	0.9	0.0
Sales	5.4	4.5	12.3	9.4
Services	8.9	10.6	33.0	29.8
Agriculture and Related	22.0	17.5	20.1	7.8
Production and Related	48.2	49.7	5.2	12.5
Labourers and others n.e.c.	1.8	0.0	0.3	0.0
Total number (=100%)	2425	2625	1276	1677
Not stated/not applicable (actual numbers)	129	206	158	292

Source: Caricom Census 1980-1981, Montserrat, volume 3, pp.21

In 1980, 30% of the active women were employed in 'services' but that same occupational group only accounted for 11% percent of male employees in 1980. The service sector is the largest area of employment for women. The clerical sector employed just 6.1% of men but 23.7% of women in 1980. The 'professional and technical' category includes teachers, nurses, lawyers, accountants, doctors and professional medical staff. Women outnumbered the men employed in this sector, which only employed 8.1% of the male workforce but 15% of the female. These three sectors combined account for 78.5% of the female workforce, showing a high degree of concentration of women's employment in just three sectors.

Within the three sectors certain trends have emerged between 1970 and 1980. The proportion of women employed in the service sector has declined from 33% to 29.8%, while the figures for male involvement in the

have risen from 8.9% to 10.6%. The latter may well reflect the expansion of the tourist industry: with the establishment of luxury hotels, men are being employed in stereotypical roles, ie. as chefs and chauffeurs. Employment of women in the clerical sector has expanded from 13% to 23.7%, an increase of over 10%. This increase is probably accounted for by the expansion in the Civil Service. There has been a very small increase in the number of women employed in the professional and technical sector, mostly due to an increase in the number of teachers⁴.

The move out of agriculture, which was discussed in Chapter III, is quite apparent here. It is now the main source of income for less than 14% of the economically active population. For women the drop in those employed in agriculture has been greater than it has been for men. The percentage of women employed in agriculture in 1970 was 20.1%, by 1980 that figure had declined to 7.8%. The figures for male employment in this same occupational grouping are 22.0% and 17.5% respectively. This decline is due to both increased mechanisation and a general decline in the importance of the activity as people try to get jobs in other spheres. Agriculture is a low status occupation in Montserrat; it is still linked with slavery; it is extremely hard work; and, critically, is low paid, in relation to manufacturing and clerical sectors.

Table 6.3 shows the percentage unemployed by both age and sex⁵. It is clear that the unemployment rates are much higher amongst the under-twenties than in any other age group. In 1980, one third of the 15-19 year olds who stated that they were economically active were unemployed, and most of them were seeking their first job. The unemployment rate among the 20-24 age-group is lower than that for 15-19 years olds but is still high, especially for women, for whom the rate is 15.5%. The rates

then decrease steadily with age, but in all cases the rates are higher for women.

Table 6.3 Percentage unemployed by age and sex, 1970 and 1980

Age group	1970			1980		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
15-19	14.9	33.9	22.7	26.1	41.4	32.7
20-24	3.0	11.4	6.3	8.2	15.5	11.5
25-44	3.1	3.5	3.3	3.2	8.6	5.5
45-64	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.3	7.7	5.0
65+	3.5	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.4	3.0
All ages	5.7	11.6	7.8	7.5	14.9	10.5
Total Number unemployed	145	167	312	213	293	506

Source: Caricom Census 1980-1981, Montserrat, volume 3, pp. 18

The pattern for 1980 is similar to that for 1970 but with higher rates. This could be due to demography; alternatively, it could reflect an increasing number of people wanting to take advantage of the new opportunities for employment and thus stating themselves formally as unemployed. Furthermore, with an increase in the opportunities in the formal sector, people could be less willing to participate or at least admit to participating in informal activities⁶.

The above three tables have shown the breakdown of the economically active population by gender in Montserrat for the years 1970 and 1980. Clearly, the employment patterns, and opportunities, for men and women conform to the broad Caribbean patterns of occupational segregation and the increasing female participation rates. Educated women are concentrated in the service and clerical sectors, followed by the professional and technical sectors (teaching and nursing). Less educated women are found in production and related sectors. Hence the patterns of

women's employment in the Caribbean as a whole described by researchers, (Gill:1984, Yelvington:1988a, Young & Rivera Quintero:1980), is also true for Montserrat (cf. Chapter III).

What follows is a detailed investigation of the nature of women's employment in Montserrat.

6.4 The Nature of Employment Opportunities For Women

This section will consider first, the work histories of the employed women. Second, the changes in employment opportunities for women. Part three looks in more detail at the promotional prospects women can expect once they are employed.

6.4.1 Work histories

Table 6.4 shows the previous jobs of the 100 women interviewed. Many of the women have always done the type of work that they are doing now; others have had quite marked career changes.

Very few of the women have moved from agriculture. The two that did move followed the island-wide pattern of moving into a form of manufacturing, in this case, textiles. In most cases the women have shown stable career patterns, either working in the same place or always doing the same kind of work. This is especially true of teaching; 9 out of the 11 teachers have always been teachers; in nursing, 6 out of 10 have always been nurses; whilst in clerical work, 8 out of 12 have always been employed thus. The newly opened or expanded job types, technical and manufacturing, have drawn their staff from various areas. In the case of the technical employees they were unemployed, in service sector or

clerical jobs. The manufacturing workers were unemployed, domestic workers or in service sector jobs.

Table 6.4 Previous types of job held

Current job type	Previous job type											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Agriculture	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Clerical	8	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Finance	8	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	1	1	-	-
Textiles	8	2	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Teaching	9	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Nursing	6	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	-
Technical	-	-	3	1	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	1
Manufacturing	5	-	6	4	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	46	2	9	6	13	12	2	2	2	3	2	1

Codes for columns: 1-same job; 2-agriculture; 3-unemployed; 4-domestic; 5-services; 6-clerical; 7-textiles; 8-manufacturing; 9-nursing; 10-teaching; 11-student; 12-this is an extra job.

Source: Interviews with employed women

Diagram 6.1 shows the individual employment histories of some of the women; they show the job type, how long they worked in it and why they changed. We can see that many women have had a range of jobs before they came to their current one.

Diagram 6.1

Interviewee 18

Job 1	Job 2	Job 3/Current
Store supervisor	Hotel receptionist	Clerical supervisor
1 year, temporary post.	3 weeks, Could not cope with the night shift.	5 years

Interviewee 59

Job 1 Domestic/taking in washing 5 years, job security	Job 2 Waitressing 3 years, pregnancy (no maternity leave)	Job 3/Current Textiles 4 years
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Interviewee 63

Job 1 Hotel maid 3 years, housekeeper did not like her & sacked her	Unemployed Stayed at home 1 year	Job 3/Current Textiles 7 years
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These histories show that for these three women the move from one job to another has involved their upward mobility into better types of employment, both in respect of pay and conditions, and also in respect of the status the jobs command. This is a common trend for the whole sample where women have changed jobs; 13% were in service jobs before they entered clerical, textile, nursing, technical or manufacturing types jobs; 12% were in clerical jobs before going into finance, teaching, nursing or technical jobs; 9% were previously unemployed before employment in technical or manufacturing type jobs; 6% were domestics before going into textile, technical or manufacturing type jobs.

6.4.2 Changes in employment opportunities

As can be seen from tables 6.1 and 6.2 women are firmly located in certain employment sectors. However, while the range of employment opportunities for women has not changed to any great extent, there are increased chances of gaining employment in those sectors. For example, a variety of firms have either started up on the island or existing firms have expanded: Datapress opened in September 1986, and Johnson's have expanded steadily from 1985 onwards.

We can conclude, therefore, that whilst opportunities available to

women remain much as before, there has been an increase in the number of jobs in the sectors within which women form the bulk of the workforce. Rather than causing instability in the workforce as women move between jobs, the new vacancies appear to be being filled by women who were either previously unemployed, or in temporary jobs.

6.4.3 Women's prospects of promotion: vertical segregation in the Montserratian labour force

We have seen that there has been an increase in the opportunity for women to work, even though those opportunities remain in specific sectors. Let us now consider the opportunities for promotion that women employees can expect: to what extent is the Montserratian workforce vertically, as well as horizontally, segregated?

For educated women in the professional sectors the chances of promotion appear to be good. Teachers and nurses are often given grants or seconded to go overseas to gain further training and/or qualifications. The Civil Service provides various 'in-service' training facilities which can help the careers of women who are unable to go away to gain further qualifications. When interviewed, the Labour Commissioner felt that there was no difference in the promotional chances between men or women, or between married or unmarried women. In the clerical and financial sectors, the opportunities for promotion through the ranks after gaining experience on the job also appear to be high. Below I consider more detailed examples of women who have gained either promotion or higher qualifications, and thus higher wages.

Interview 38:

"I'm a mathematics teacher, I'm the head of department now. I've been here for about 7 or 8 years. I taught for a year and then I went to university. I got a Government scholarship. I've been teaching here since I went to university."

Such governmental support for teachers to gain training at the teacher training colleges in Antigua or Guyana, or to go away to the University of West Indies (UWI) to study for a degree, has been of great benefit to many teachers, the majority of whom are women.

Nurses too are able to take advantage of in-service training and may be seconded by the Government to do special training overseas. This nurse for example;

Interview 50:

"I'm a ward sister. I've been a nurse for about 20 years...I left primary school with just a school leaving certificate. Then I did nursing training for 3 years and additional training in Dominica for theatre techniques, and training for eye-treatments in St. Lucia."

Again, the following interviewee is a highly qualified nurse although she left school with no formal qualifications.

Interview 54:

"I'm a public health nurse and family nurse practitioner...I have 4 clinics and supervise all the district nurses. I share the doctors clinics. I've been at this position for about 3 years. I was a ward sister for about 7 years...I left with a school leaving certificate, then I did general nursing and midwifery in Montserrat, an optimology course in Barbados, an administration course in Jamaica, a family nurse practitioner course in St. Vincent and a basic epidemiology course in Trinidad."

Within the Civil Service there are similar examples of women who have had the chance to do further training and this has benefited them when it comes to applications for promotion. This top Civil Servant has been employed by the Government since she left school with 'A' levels. While in Government employment she studied for a Certificate in Public Administration and was then seconded to do further qualifications in Jamaica at the UWI.

Interview 7:

"I'm an Assistant Secretary and perform the duties of a personal assistant to the Chief Minister, that's from 1978 so that's 9 years. I was always in the Government since I left school. In those days to be employed by the Government was the thing, you had job security. Two banks offered me jobs but I figured that it's better to work with the Government."

In the private sector a similar pattern obtains. Interviewee 21 began her employed career as a teacher. She found that although she enjoyed teaching she didn't want to stay. Her parents were both teachers and many of her contemporary colleagues were her cousins and she felt that the atmosphere was too claustrophobic. She applied to one of the banks and was given a job. Since then she has been steadily promoted up through the ranks;

"I'm the Assistant Manager, I've been here for 18 years...I'm happy here, you have problems with any job but you are able to cope with them. I've done well here, the next stage is manager! There haven't been any Montserratian managers yet, they don't seem to stay long enough to employ them, when they get to that stage they move away.!"⁷

In the non-professional jobs it appears that women are also promoted to the ranks of supervisors, (interviewees 73 and 98), or to managerial positions, (interviewee 70).

It appears therefore that within certain employment sectors there are opportunities to train further and earn promotion to some of the top positions within a chosen career. As many women fill these top positions it appears that they take full advantage of such opportunities when they arise. I found no evidence in Montserrat to support the finding of Antrobus (1986:46) that women are only promoted when there is a shortage of men with similar skills. It appears that whoever is best qualified for the job gets it and that there is little or no vertical segregation within places of employment, regardless of sector.

6.4.4 Conclusion

What have the above observations told us about the pattern of gender relations? It appears that despite changes in the structure and size of the workforce and the growth of new industries women remain

confined to a choice of career in a limited number of occupations. However, it must also be said that the same is true for men. There is a distinct horizontal segregation of the workforce.

Women appear to have stable work histories with the large majority currently working in the jobs they have always done, or have done for many years. Where women have changed jobs it has usually entailed a movement upwards to a better type of job, rather than downward mobility. Within the workplace there is little vertical segregation with women benefiting from Government schemes for gaining further qualifications and from promotion which draws people from the lower ranks. Given the opportunities of employment and the willingness of women to take advantage of such opportunities, it may be taken that women are not discriminated against within the workplace and, if they are capable of the job, stand as good a chance of being selected as men. In the following section, these interview-based conclusions are compared with workplace surveys and a specific case study of horizontal and vertical segregation within the Montserratian civil service.

6.5 Workplace Segregation: Vertical Segregation

The information which forms the basis of this section comes from the interviews that were carried out with employers on Montserrat during 1986 and 1987. Seven employers, two head and one deputy-head teachers, and the senior nursing administration officer were interviewed. Of the employers or managers, three were expatriates; all the others were Montserratian. While in most of the places of employment considered there was a hierarchical structure, men do not dominate this hierarchy to the same extent as has been found in other case studies, notably Kevin

Yelvington's study of an assembly factory in Trinidad, (1988a). We do find though that men hold the top positions in all of the first seven places of employment listed in table 6.5.

Once we look below these top owner/manager positions we find that women are quite well represented, and strongly dominate supervisory and other higher positions. While women may not be right at the top they are nearer than would have been expected from a reading of the Caribbean literature discussed in Chapter III. In Montserrat, Johnson's electronic assembly plant bears a strong resemblance to the factory studied by Yelvington. He found that none of the managerial and supervisory positions were held by women (1988a). By contrast, Johnson's has four managerial positions and 1 of these is held by a woman. All the supervisors and quality control workers are women, even though there are 46 men employed on the assembly lines alongside women.

Table 6.5 The vertical segregation of selected workplaces

Name of employer	Total no. employees	No. men	No. women	Managerial positions		Supervisory positions		Other high positions	
				men	women	men	women	men	women
Stamp Office	14	2	12	1	-	-	4	-	2
Sun Tops Ltd	17	6	11	1	-	-	1	2	-
Bank 1	31	7	24	1	2	1	3	1	6
Bank 2	28	7	21	1	-	1	3	-	3
Mont. Textiles	42	5	37	2	-	1	2	-	3
Datapress	49	2	47	1	2	-	1	-	-
Johnson's	250	50	200	3	1	-	25	-	2
Teachers				Principal		Deputy head			
Salem	20	8	12	-	1	-	1	-	-
MSS	32	9	23	1	-	-	1	-	-
Dagenham	32	4	28	-	1	1	-	-	-
Nurses				Ward sis/ public health		Qualified/ district			
Hospital	41	-	41	-	10	-	17	-	-
District	14	-	14	-	4	-	6	-	-

In the case of employment in the medical profession, women effectively run the hospital and the clinics. Women also dominate the teaching profession both numerically and in top positions. We can therefore conclude that while there is an occupational segregation by gender, within the particular workplaces where women predominate there is not a strict vertical segregation.

6.5.1 The Montserratian civil service: a case study of segregation

The Civil Service is the largest single employer on the island and this section will consider briefly the nature of the gender division found therein. The data for table 6.6 was gathered for me by the Assistant Secretary in the Administration Department.

Table 6.6 Occupational segregation in the Civil Service

Ministry/department	Males	Females	Total
Governor's Office	1	3	4
Administration	21	14	35
Police	81	18	99
Legal	4	2	6
Judicial	4	7	11
Audit	6	11	17
Legislature	-	4	4
Chief Minister's Office	13	16	29
Ministry of Finance	2	5	7
Development Unit	5	6	11
Treasury	4	12	16
Customs and Excise	20	6	26
Inland Revenue	5	10	15
Post Office	5	13	18
Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Lands and Housing	29	22	51
Ministry of Communications & Works	53	9	62
Ministry of Education	65	145	210
Ministry of Health & Community Services	31	88	119
Total	349	391	740

Source: Department of Administration, Montserratian Civil Service

The figures refer to establishment employees, that is those who will receive a pension and full employees benefits. Non-establishment staff do not receive a pension, no gratuity on their retirement, only two weeks holiday and lower rates of pay. Such workers include those who work on the roads, cleaners, domestic worker and ancillary hospital workers. The Government employs 740 establishment staff, of which 391 are women; of these 391 women only 130 are married.

We can see from this that women are concentrated in the education and health ministries but that they are also fairly well represented throughout the other departments and ministries. Men are quite heavily concentrated in the Communications and Works department, Customs and Excise and the Police. These jobs either involve security work or heavy manual labour. While we can see that women form the main bulk of Civil Service employees it is important to investigate the positions they hold within the service.

Table 6.7 shows the number of women with top professional posts. We can see from this table that many women have risen to quite high positions within their particular department or ministry; this is especially true of the financial department, and the ministries of education and health. However, few women have reached the top Civil Service positions of the ministries (permanent and senior assistant secretaries).

This means that although women dominate the service numerically and certainly have a lot of control within specific departments and ministries, it is men that still have absolute control over the service as a whole. This is usually because they were men who went overseas, in particular to the U.K. and gained experience in the British Civil Service

and higher education qualifications. For example the permanent secretary to the Chief Minister had gained both a BSc and a Ph.D at British universities, and the manager of the Social Security department had gained a scholarship to Oxford University. It would appear therefore that men were in these positions due to their broader experience, rather than any form of sex discrimination.

Table 6.7 Range of top Civil Service positions held by women

Professional Post	Number held by women	Total number of posts
Permanent Secretary	1	7
Principal Assistant Secretary	2	7
Senior Assistant Secretary	2	7
Assistant Secretary	5	7
Clerk of Councils	1	1
Regional Affairs Officer	1	1
Economist	2	2
Labour Commissioner	1	1
Chief Librarian	1	1
Director of Tourism	1	1
Accountant General	1	1
Senior Auditor	1	1
Deputy Controller, Inland Revenue	1	1
Postmaster General	1	1
Deputy Controller, Post Office	1	1
Director of Education	1	1
Principal of Secondary School	2	3
Deputy Principal of secondary School	3	3
Head Teachers	10	10
Co-ordinator of Early Childhood Education	1	1
Chief Community Development Officer	1	1
Medical officer	1	2
Principal Nursing Officer	1	1
Chief Training Officer	1	2
Total	43	64

Source: Department of administration, Montserratian Civil Service

6.5.2. Conclusion

This section has shown that while there is horizontal segregation in the Montserratian workforce there is not so much vertical segregation. Within the Civil Service, the largest single employer on the island, women are very well represented throughout all levels of the service excepting the very top positions. The Civil Service has an equal opportunities policy, and whilst men have reached the top positions through discrimination, I would suggest that they hold such grades because it is they who are more highly qualified. Whether there is any discrimination in deciding who goes overseas is another question.

6.6 Women's Ideas About Their Employment

This section will deal with what the women themselves feel about their employment and why they are in their current jobs. It will also include an assessment of particular factors which might be preventing women from achieving their full potential as employees.

6.6.1 Is it important to have a job?

This part considers the responses given by the employed women when they were asked the question, 'Do you think it is important for you to have a job?', and 'Why do you think this?' All 100 women said that it was important for them to have a job, and some said clearly that they felt it was as important for women to have jobs as men. They felt that they needed to have a job for a variety of reasons. The most important reason that was repeated time and time again was the desire to feel independent and not have to rely on anyone else. Some felt that it was important that they were able to contribute financially to their

household, either to help their mothers or parents, or to share the household expenses with their male partners. Others gave the reason that they wanted to be able to buy the things they needed for themselves and for their children. Other reasons included the opportunities to gain experience, to learn new skills and to keep themselves occupied. Below are some of the responses from the women.

Interview 26:

"You need money, without money you can't survive. Women need jobs as much as men."

Interview 55:

"I think it's very important. It makes you feel independent, it is a good experience. I would go mad if I had to stay at home every day, I just couldn't cope with it. I really enjoy my job, although it is tiring, I enjoy having the responsibility, I enjoy the challenge. I think it's important for women because the way things are in Montserrat it is very difficult to get anything from the men and so the women have to get out and make their own living. They can't depend on the men."

Interview 9:

"Yes, it's important because it's nice to know you are dependent on your own self because when you are dependent on someone else it's harder. You have a job and you are an independent person and I've always wanted to be independent."

Interview 14:

"Very important, especially when you have your mother in your home so we can help out. She will go and buy food, we buy ourselves a pair of shoe and save her that, I buy clothes for me and my other sisters who aren't working. Sometimes I'll help with paying bills, I have money to do anything."

Interview 48:

"There are so many essential things that one needs in life which you can't get without having money and I think one can only get money from having a job. Even though I'm married I still want to work, the cost of living is high and it keeps getting higher, I think that more money is needed all the time."

Interview 52:

"Very important. In order to survive financially and if you are to care for yourself and care for your children, like now my kids would be thinking about going to college, you need money to help them go and do that."

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These women clearly feel that the workplace is a legitimate area in which they should be involved. While the sense of having a job is important for the income and the survival aspect, it also has other values for the women themselves (Gill, 1984:20, 112). Women value the independence their job gives them, in particular the fact that they do not have to rely on their male partner for financial handouts. While women feel that they have a right to have a job they are likely to have a positive attitude about their employment and may not be the docile and submissive workforce that is found in other Caribbean societies (Women and Social Production Seminar, 1980:95, Yelvington, 1988a). Women who do not feel guilty about working even though they have children are probably more likely to feel they have as much right to promotion as male employees and so apply more often. For many women, having children is not a reason for their exclusion from the workplace but rather an important reason for their inclusion. As we have seen, many of the women said that they wanted to be able to support their children, buy them the things they need and help them to get a good education. Providing for their children is a major incentive to find work. Section 6.8, which discusses the problems women as employees face, demonstrates some of the intricate planning that goes into organising childcare around employment. For these women their employment is equally important to them as their children. They would agree with Yelvington (1988a) that their having children is indeed a positive reason for them to be in the workforce rather than a reason for keeping them out or limiting their activity.

6.6.2 Women's ideas about jobs they should/could do

This section reviews the replies from interviewees when they were asked which job they would like to do if they could choose. It will

consider whether their choices reflect a rigid attitude about the accepted gender division of labour. The findings from the interviews are presented in the tables below. Over half the women would like to change their career if they had the chance. However, it should not be inferred from this that these women are unhappy in their current jobs. Many of the women began their response with, 'I'm very happy with this job, but if I had to change or got the chance to change then maybe I would like to have a go at..' or words to that effect. For other women, their preferred choice was not very different from their current job and was something they hoped they could move into in the future. This was especially true of women working at Datapress who would mostly like to go into secretarial work.

Table 6.8 Would women consider a career change?

Current Job (Total number in job type)	Stay in same job	Stay in same work type but different job	Change career	No answer
Farmer (2)	2	-	-	-
Clerical (12)	3	3	6	-
Finance (16)	4	7	4	1
Textiles (14)	4	-	10	-
Teacher (11)	3	3	5	-
Nurses (10)	2	4	4	-
Technical (15)	4	-	11	-
Manufacturing (20)	2	-	13	5
Total	24	17	53	6

It is clear from table 6.9 that the most popular choice for either a career move or an improvement in the current position is the field of medical care, in particular nursing care; only one woman said that she wanted to be a doctor. Secretarial work, computing and accounting are also important choices. The former is probably more commonly thought of as a 'woman's job', but the latter is a new area of development on the

island and it is clear that women see accounting and computing as legitimate areas of employment for themselves. Ten women said that they would only want to leave their current jobs if they could have their own business, usually a boutique, and that they would enjoy being self-employed. It was mostly women in the banks or Civil Service who felt they were competent to run their own business. The variety of jobs that women consider they may be able to do is quite broad when we include the professions listed under the heading of 'Other'. While most women appear to choose the more traditional areas of women's employment, there is also a sizeable number of women who would like to go into non-traditional types of work such as, the police, journalism, agricultural economics, diplomacy and to be an electrician.

Table 6.9 Types of job women would like to do

Current job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Civil Service	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Sun Tops Ltd	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stamp Office	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Banks	3	6	1	2	-	-	-	6	-	-
Teacher	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1
Nurse	2	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	1	-
Mont. Textiles	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	-	1	3
Datapress	-	2	-	1	1	-	1	-	6	-
Johnson's	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	4	4
Total(78)	10	13	3	15	6	2	2	6	12	9

Job codes; 1-own business; 2-computing or accounting; 3-education, including teaching; 4-'medical care' including nursing, physiotherapist, doctor, family counsellor, psychology; 5-'fashion and art' including fashion design, craft work and sewing; 6-writer or journalist; 7-agriculture and gardening; 8-further education; 9-secretarial work; 10-other including diplomat, police-woman, cook, hairdresser, telephone operator and electrician.

Source for tables 6.8 & 6.9: Interviews with employed women.

While most women are currently in jobs associated with women's employment, many would move into non-traditional jobs if they had the

opportunity; despite the fact there are few or no positive role models in such types of job they still see them as potential areas for their own involvement. This could mean that they may have a positive attitude towards their own daughters if they said that they wanted to enter a non-traditional job.

6.6.3 Why women are doing their current jobs

As we saw in section 6.4.3, some women have changed their jobs, perhaps not all recently, but at some point in their employment history. This section will look at why these women changed jobs and why they do the jobs they do now. It will tell us something about the women's attitudes to their own careers and how they see themselves as workers.

Table 6.10 Why women do their current jobs

Total no.	Better Job	More Money	Better Hours	Sacked/ Disagree- ment	Temp. Job/unemp-loyed	Moved Island	Moved by Employer	No answer
100	16	18	3	7	16	7	7	26

Source: Interviews with employed women

In 50% of the cases the job move was to improve their employment position. In only two cases were women sacked; mostly they left due to difficulties with their employer. Where women were in temporary jobs it was usually as an in-fill for maternity leave and they always took permanent employment when it was offered. Hence women have strong ideas about how they can improve their employment position and are ambitious. Below are some responses from the women as they explain why they do the jobs they do.

Interview 3:

"I chose the Civil Service because it's more secure, they can't just fire you off the bat, you have to go through a lot of

procedures before they can do that. Also when you retire you have a pension."

Interview 14:

"I worked at the Social League Sewing Centre. I worked there for 3 years. They gave me \$35 a week for training and then it went to \$65 a week, but it stayed at that. I was working there for 3 years and I am still getting the same, so I told my mother I can't stay there no longer, if I have to help you with things I can't work there anymore. Here at first I got \$75 a week and now I'm on piece-work."

Interview 25:

"That other job was only a temporary job and this one was permanent so I left the office early because of this job."

Interview 41:

"I always like teaching, when I was growing up I was always teaching something, sometimes in the summer, when I was in the secondary school. Parents would send their little kids to me and I would give them lessons."

Interview 47:

"When I was younger I liked to see the girls in their uniforms and I wondered what it would be like to give injections and look after and care for people, I wanted to experience it for myself. I've always been a nurse."

We can see, therefore, that the women have quite positive reasons for doing the jobs they now do; they have not just drifted into a particular job, but rather have set themselves a goal and tried to reach it. However, not all the women are in the jobs they would like or feel they are able to do. For some a turn of circumstance prevented them from achieving their goal. Some women had to leave school early or without any formal qualifications _because they became pregnant, although they actually formally state that they were not 'clever enough'. In other cases the women feel that it would be impossible to get the necessary qualification.

Interview 87:

"I would like to be a nurse but I think the time's gone and I really don't have the brains, I left school too early."

Interview 89:

"If I could choose I would like to be an electrician but I would have to go and study for that."

Interview 52:

"I wanted to be a teacher. I taught for one year. When I was teaching I got pregnant and I wasn't married so I had to leave. Then after my second baby I decided to go into nursing."

As we will see in Chapter VIII, an unplanned pregnancy frequently forces a woman to adapt her expectations and to accept an alternative course. In the large majority of cases the employed women are doing the jobs they want to do and many are looking forward to either moving on in their current careers or changing jobs after further study or gaining more qualifications.

6.6.4 What do children think about women's employment?

The children at secondary school now are the work force of tomorrow. The children's questionnaire asked whether they thought that women should have paid jobs, and the reason for their response. Yolanda Moses (1976 & 1977) found that the general idea about women's employment was that they should not work but rather stay at home to serve their male partner and look after the children. As we have seen such an attitude no longer seems to prevail amongst adult women and, if we consider the results from the questionnaire, it appears that children do not hold with those attitudes either.

We see that apart from two children who responded with a 'Don't know', all the children felt that women should have paid jobs. The boys felt that the strongest argument in favour of this was that the women would be able to contribute to the household and help with their family's needs. However the same number of boys also gave responses which indicated that they accepted that women needed an income of their own.

Table 6.11 Ideas about women's employment: boys

Response		Explanation				
Yes	No	Don't Know	To have their own money	To help the household	To help themselves	To keep out of trouble
14	-	1	3	6	2	1
		Can't leave it to the men	Independence		May not want to work	No answer
		1	1		1	3

For the girls the most important reasons for their support of women's employment was the independence it offered, with 31% giving this explanation. Helping their households and themselves were also important explanations. We see therefore that there is a considerable degree of similarity between what adult women and teenage girls see as an important justification for women's employment.

Table 6.12 Ideas about women's employment: girls

Response			Explanation								
Yes	No	Don't know	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
34	-	1	4	8	7	1	3	1	2	11	4

Note: Some of the children gave more than one explanation, so they add up to more than 50.

Codes: 1-to have their own money; 2-to help the household; 3-to help themselves; 4-to keep out of trouble; 5-it is important; 6-to earn money like men; 7-good experience and education; 8-independence; 9-no answer.

Source: Questionnaires with children

6.6.5 What will the children do?

This section looks at the results from the children's questionnaires which asked the children two questions about their

possible future employment; 'Which job would you like to do?' and 'Which job do you think you will do?'

Table 6.13 Types of jobs children wish to do and think they will do

Jobs boys wish they could do

No. of boys	Lawyer	Architect	Doctor	Accounting/ computing	Pilot/Air traffic controller	Other(Actor, toy-maker, fisherman mechanic)
15	2	2	1	3	3	4

Jobs boys think they will do

No. of boys	Lawyer	Busi- ness	Accounting/ computing	Pilot/Air traffic controller	Const- ruction	Police	Other
15	1	1	4	2	2	1	4

Other: includes shop-worker, mechanic, artist, fisherman.

Jobs girls wish they could do

No. of girls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
35	14	5	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1

Note: One girl gave two responses

Jobs girls think they will do

No of girls	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	-	9	13	12
35	15	3	3	3	1	1	2	-	2	4	1

Codes: 1-teacher; 2-nurse; 3-secretary; 4-accountant/computing; 5-doctor; 6-police woman/social worker; 7-air hostess; 8-business; 9-shop-worker/waitress; 10-pharmacist/lab assistant; 11-telephone operator; 12-don't know; 13-banking.

Source: Questionnaires with children.

The children were asked these two questions to try and ascertain whether they felt that they would have to be more realistic about their

job aspirations as the time for their entry into the job market came closer.

In most cases both boys and girls showed a degree of imagination about the kinds of jobs they would like to do and most felt confident that they would be able to go into that chosen career. It is clear that there is quite a marked gender division in the type of jobs they say that they want to do. For instance, only boys mentioned the jobs of lawyer, architect and pilot. Only girls mentioned teaching, nursing and office work. They both felt that computing, accounting and banking were possible options for them. Most of the children had quite high ambitions, aiming for the professions and in all cases better jobs than those held by the adults bringing them up.

Rather than a strict socialisation into accepted gender roles, which the current education system is actually trying to avoid, it seems that the presence or absence of positive role models plays an important part in helping children decide about their own careers. There are no female lawyers on Montserrat, there are few male teachers and no male nurses. However, both men and women are visibly employed in accounting, banking and computing. The head teacher of one of the secondary schools felt role models to be very important in influencing children's choices. In her secondary school both boys and girls were allowed to do Industrial Arts before it was educational policy to stop gender segregation of subjects. They also allowed girls to do agriculture before the other secondary schools; there was a special reason for this:

"In 1982 we got a new agriculture teacher and she was a woman. As a woman was teaching we decided to let girls choose agriculture if they wanted to do it as well. Before this the girls would do crafts and the boys would go for agriculture. But with a woman teacher quite a few girls chose agriculture. I think it was because they saw someone who was successful in that field and was a woman."

It could be that as more women enter a variety of professions, (there were two women training to be lawyers at the UWI while I was on the island) then the number of positive role models will increase and girls will appreciate that there are more and more opportunities for them to go into. All the girls gave an answer to the question about having a job and so they all see themselves as having jobs in the future.

6.6.6 Conclusion

There has been a marked change from the time of Moses' study in 1976 and women now see the workplace as an important area for their involvement. They value their employment for the independence it allows them and all feel that it is very important that they work. These ideas are shared by the teenage children. Not only do women value their employment but they are also ambitious, wanting to gain more experience and training in order to improve their position. They are not women working to supplement a male income, they are women forging a career for themselves.

6.7 Employers Attitudes Towards Women Workers

This section looks at the employment legislation which affects women's employment. This is all bound up in the Labour Ordinance and is legally binding, and therefore, has some influence over the way employers treat their workforce. The second part considers what the employers themselves said about the employment of women as this will tell us something about employers' stereotypes of women workers.

6.7.1 Employment legislation

The information in this section is based on the data gathered through an interview with the Labour Commissioner, the Manager of the Social Security Office and the Child Education Officer.

Since 1979 the Montserratian Government has had a general policy that there should be no discrimination due to race, sex, colour, religion and class, in employment or in any other sphere. Legislation concerning employment is all bound up in the single Labour Ordinance, hereafter referred to as LO. There is no provision in the LO to make equal pay for equal work compulsory. The Labour Commissioner was reluctant to say that there was not a direct policy but that it was more a case of people not wanting to accept that there was a problem. However she said that increasingly the Government was coming to realise that sex discrimination in pay was becoming a problem. She stated:

"My own opinion is that there are positions in the private sector that are bad. I know, for example, that within certain jobs in the agricultural sector and in the industrial sector that men are paid higher wages than women, in the same jobs. So I have no doubt at all that in particular areas there is discrimination. There are jobs done by women that are comparable to those done by men but that they are paid less. In the large companies of the private sector, like Telecommunications Ltd, Montserrat Electricity Generating Board, Montserrat Water Services and businesses like that, then I think they have made a deliberate attempt to follow the policy of equal pay for equal work. But in the smaller companies my suspicion is that women are not paid an equal amount."

When asked if she thought there was any particular reason for the discrimination she replied,

"I think it's a hangover from the belief that the man supposedly carries more responsibility whether it is in the home or even in the job itself. The reality is that the men are not so responsible and about half the heads of household in Montserrat are women."

The Government therefore, while it has a policy of equal pay for equal work itself, seems reluctant to legislate to enforce such policy on the private sector. It does appear to be taking the problem of low pay a

little more seriously.

As yet the LO has not set a minimum wage. When asked about this the Labour Commissioner responded;

"The LO has the machinery to set a minimum wage if there is any feeling that there is a need to set a minimum wage for a particular category of employment. For a long time there hasn't been considered to be a need for a minimum wage. In recent years the Government has become concerned because a few companies have brought in piece-work, which never before existed in Montserrat. Because of this people have been working for very low wages, especially at the beginning of an operation when they are slow, when they are just learning, then they are often working for next to nothing. It won't even pay for their transportation to work. Recently the Government has become concerned and has set up a committee to look into the question of a minimum wage."

While the Government has been slow to investigate or do anything about low pay and wage discrimination it has been quicker to act in two other areas which have had direct beneficial effects on women employees, namely maternity leave and child-care.

It is now state law that all employed women are entitled to a minimum of 28 working days paid maternity leave after they have been employed for one year. The Civil Service and other major employers allow two or three months leave and women can take their vacation leave at the same time. The law also provides 14 days sick leave without loss of pay for all employees. If women wish to take longer than the 28 days paid leave they can arrange that with their employer but they do not have to be paid for any time longer than the 28 days. On her return to work a woman cannot be given any job below the level of the one in which she was employed prior to the leave.

In the area of child-care, while there were no places of employment with their own creches the Government has provided a variety of day-care facilities. It runs two day-care centres for children aged one to three, for unmarried mothers. It also provides ten nursery schools for children

aged three to five, which is adequate to cater for all Montserratian children at that age. In an interview with the Child Education Officer I learnt that the day-care centres in particular were set up in the 1970's at a time when much small-scale industrial development was taking place. She said;

"At this time there were a lot of young girls with children being taken into the industries and they had difficulty with their babies. So the Government at that time felt that it was necessary to do something to help these women. With the help of the British Save the Children Fund we were able to open two day-care centres"

The Government therefore saw a need specific to women employees and responded quickly. The day-care centres always have more applications than they have places and the Government is looking into the possibility of opening another centre in the northern region.

While the Government does appear to be dragging its feet over the problems of low and unequal wages it has been supportive of moves to establish a social security fund. The manager of the Social Security Fund told me that the various schemes had been started in the early and mid 1980s and that most benefits were now established. He stated;

"The benefits we now provide under social security are for sickness benefits, maternity benefits which is in the form of an allowance and a grant, invalidity pensions, invalidity grant, age benefits, survivors benefits and pensions."

All employees and employers now have to pay into the fund and all employees can claim on the scheme once they have been employed for six months. For women who can now qualify for the maternity leave, no matter how long their leave is they are paid an allowance for 12 weeks, even if they only have four weeks maternity leave.

In the past there has been a Government policy which proved damaging to women employed as teachers and nurses. Until the mid 1970s it was Government policy to sack all teachers and nurses who became pregnant

if they were not married. While it was not always strictly enforced at times of staff shortages, many women suffered from the policy. They either had to marry or lose their job. It did not affect married women who became pregnant. Even now an unmarried teacher may be asked to stop teaching when her pregnancy begins to show but she is not sacked and can return to work once the baby is born. The Commissioner reported that there were still some problems in the private sector where some schools wanted to sack unmarried pregnant teachers but that the law now stipulated that if they did so the woman had to be paid compensation.

In some areas, legislation has been designed to benefit women workers and in some cases was set up in direct response to the increasing numbers of women entering the workforce. In other cases there are clearly discrepancies in the way women are treated and while there is now a recognition that there is a problem over discrimination in wages, as yet, there have been no legislative moves to rectify the situation.

6.7.2 Employers attitudes

This section is quite brief but it does fill a gap in the literature mentioned in Chapter III. It will look at the responses to background interviews carried out with the following employers or owners; Stamp Office, Sun Tops Ltd, The two banks, Datapress and Johnson's. They were all asked why they had more female employees than male.

Stamp Office Manager:

"When the industry was set up in 1976 it was felt that women would be better, more careful about handling the stamps and would understand more about what the industry stands for so they employed women from the beginning and there is no reason to change that."

Bank 1:

"One reason is that men don't usually want to work more than a year. They want to earn the money or try to get a scholarship to go to university. The bank prefers to employ people who are going to stay long term. Women are more stable in this society, they have to take care of families and they tend to be much more reliable."

Bank 2:

"Well there are more women on the island, I was always told there was a ratio of 6:1, women to men! Women prefer office jobs, whereas men tend to prefer outside jobs. I think women are more versatile and reliable and so we exercise a positive choice, we want to employ mostly women."

Johnsons:

"One of the reasons is that unemployment is high among women. Also they have better rates of application to do a job and greater dexterity. Women do such work much better, that's true all over the world. Every employee we have has at least one child, but we don't discriminate in the interviews. It causes problems but on Montserrat you have to learn to accept it."

These employers display quite a positive attitude to the employment of women, although they do share some stereotyped ideas about 'suitable' work for women. Phrases such as; 'more careful'; 'going to stay long term'; 'reliable and stable'; 'women prefer office jobs'; women have greater dexterity...that's true all over the world', clearly demonstrate the strength of stereotypes of women workers. The fact that such stereotypes are unquestioned and assumed shows that Montserratian women conform in some degree to the image of an ideal workforce. They are seen to be reliable, stable, versatile, and thus conform to the stereotype female workforce discussed by various authors within the development field (Beneria & Sen: 1988,358, Elson & Pearson:1981, Lim:1981, Redclift: 1988). Montserratian employers have these stereotypes, but they do not appear to be using them as an excuse for paying women lower wages than men, nor for preventing them from gaining promotion to positions of greater responsibility. They, unlike employers in other underdeveloped countries, do not only select young, unmarried, childless women. There actually appears to be some acceptance of the argument that women with children are probably going to be more reliable workers. As well as stereotypes, the employers did have positive things to say about why they employed women. In the case of the two banks it appears that over time

they have realised that the women prove to be a responsible and industrious workforce, and so now they positively recruit women. The Stamp Office initially understood that women would have the necessary attitude to the job.

The following employee has a less positive explanation for why women are employed and the last one is very negative about having to employ women.

Datapress:

"We did have 3 or 4 men applying but most of them thought they would be learning how to operate computers, all we do is data entry. The wages seem to be too low for men, you can't get men to work for less than \$20 an hour it seems, the women get \$3 an hour as the base rate but they can earn more; it's based on production. Also it's women who have the typing skills."

The mention of low pay is an important point because, as will be shown below, some women are on very low wages but it appears that they are more willing to work for such wages than men. Men know that if they could get a job in construction they would earn much more money than working somewhere like Datapress. The women have less choice.

Sun Tops Ltd:

"All our workers have children so they need time off when the children are sick. It is a major drawback of ever getting reliability and constant production from your employees. If I could I would always choose men to work instead of women, but you find in the garment industry here that it is the women who have the expertise. I am forced to provide maternity leave. I think that women now want everything on a plate. Getting pregnant is your responsibility, you have to take care of your child yourself. You shouldn't depend on other people to bring them up. They want to see the doctor, they have maternity leave and they want more time when the brat is actually born. I would only give maternity leave as long as she was a good worker and proved to be doing as much as she could for herself."

In the latter case there is direct dislike of having to employ women and this employer would not give maternity leave unless Government policy forced her to. A notable distinction between the two latter

employers and the former four is that the latter are both expatriates from the United States and Canada. Although they are both women they appear to have adopted the attitude that employing women with children is a bad risk, whereas the Montserratian employers see this as a major reason why women are valuable and reliable employees. The latter two employers show a misunderstanding of the pattern of social organisation on the island and an adherence to cultural attitudes which are out of place in the Caribbean. The low rates of commitment to the job in the latter two cases could be due to the fact that these companies pay the lowest wages of this particular sample (section 6.7.3) rather than the fact that the female employees have children.

6.7.3 Women's wage rates

All the women interviewed were asked about their average weekly wage and whether they found it easy or difficult to live on. Some of the women also mentioned that they had additional sources of income which they found necessary to maintain their standard of living. The findings are presented in the tables below. Table 6.14 shows a break down of the average weekly wages of the employed women by the place of their current employment.

There is a clear divide between the women employed in professional and clerical jobs and those in manual employment. The former also enjoy other fringe benefits such as uniform allowances, transport grants, good pension schemes, social clubs, longer maternity leave and higher maternity allowances, and probably most importantly, job security.

We can see that the women who are employed by Sun Tops Ltd, Montserrat Textiles, Datapress and Johnson's are the lowest paid workers, with all of them earning less than \$200EC a week. They are all on piece

work and so their wages can fluctuate each week⁸. This shows that the concern felt by the Government about piece-rate work mentioned above is a legitimate one. These are examples of the new industries that are moving into the island from overseas (Datapress); have been set up or are being run by expatriates (Sun Tops Ltd and Montserrat Textiles); or are owned by Montserranian entrepreneurs (Johnson's). It is clear therefore that while these industries offer women a wage as opposed to their being unemployed, working as domestics, or as agricultural labourers, it must be remembered that what they earn is very little indeed. They are an exploited workforce.

Table 6.14 Average wages of employed women

Place of employ- ment	Total no. inter- viewed	Average wage levels (\$EC)										NA
		>100	100- 150	151- 200	201- 250	251- 300	301- 400	401- 500	501- 600	601- 700	701- 800	
Farmer	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Treasury	3	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chief Mini- ster's off.	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Post office	3	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Sun Tops Ltd	4	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stamp Office	4	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank 1	8	-	-	-	3	2	1	-	1	-	1	-
Bank 2	8	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	2	-	-	-
Teachers	11	-	-	-	1	1	4	4	-	1	-	-
Nurses	10	-	-	2	-	-	7	1	-	-	-	-
Mont.Texts.	10	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Datapress	15	5	9	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Johnson's	20	-	18	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	100	9	38	7	8	8	14	9	3	1	1	2

Note: Figures shown are actual numbers.

Source: Interviews with employed women.

The next wage band is \$201 to \$300, which accounts for the Stamp Office employees, most of those at Bank 1 and half of Bank 2's employees. The next band of \$301 to \$500 incorporates two of Bank 2's employees and

most of the teachers and nurses. (Only ward sisters and district nurses can earn this much, but as many women migrated once they had qualified to gain more experience, the chances of moving up to the higher wage grades for most nurses are quite good). Only five women earn over \$500 per week and these are employees in the two banks and one teacher with 43 years experience.

Clearly, Montserratian women are not a homogeneous workforce. Depending on their educational status, their type of job and their position within that job, they can earn a considerable wage or very little.

Table 6.15 shows what the women said when they were asked whether they found that their wages were enough to meet their needs. The answers ranged from a definite 'yes', 'well if I'm careful', 'I have to manage with that but it's hard', to a definite 'no'. The table has been organised to show the responses by wage levels.

We can see from Table 6.15 that the number of women who are happy with their wages and those who are not are quite close. What is most surprising is that half the women who earn less than \$100Ec said that they were happy with that amount and that 10 of the 38 women earning less than \$150EC were also satisfied. Yet as we move down to the responses of the women with the higher wages, then we find that most of those women feel that they have to budget carefully or that they have to manage with what they have. It could be that these professional women do find it hard to maintain a standard of living they believe their social position entitles them to, and this is especially true of the women who share a mortgage or are paying it on their own. Despite the low wages that many women receive most women are quite proud of the fact they are able to budget carefully and always manage to pay their bills on time.

Table 6.15 Do the wages meet the needs?

Wage level (\$EC) and tot.no. in group	Range of responses		It's not enough but I have to cope	No
	Yes	I have to be careful		
>100 (9)	4	1	-	4
100-150 (38)	10	3	7	18
151-200 (7)	2	1	2	2
201-250 (8)	4	2	1	1
251-300 (8)	6	1	-	1
301-400 (14)	3	3	5	3
401-500 (9)	-	7	2	-
501-600 (3)	3	-	-	-
601-700 (1)	-	1	-	-
701-800 (1)	1	-	-	-
Totals (98)	33	19	17	29

Note: The two women farmers did not earn a wage and so are not included in the above table. Figures shown are actual.

Source: Interviews with employed women.

Table 6.16 shows the responses some of the women gave about possible alternative sources of income which they either rely on or may just call upon at a time of financial difficulty. Only 28 of the women gave a response. This was because some of them had no alternative income source or because they did not wish to disclose more information about their financial arrangements.

While some of the women found that they did need to seek financial help at certain times most of the women managed to survive on their own wages. We must remember from Chapter V, however, that many of these women live in multi-adult households and this thesis suggests that many women would be unable to support themselves and any children they may have on their wages alone.

Table 6.16 **Alternative sources of income**

Wage level	Type of alternative source					
	Other job	Boyfriend/husband	Relatives, Montserrat	Relatives, overseas	Children's father	Working children
>100	2	-	2	1	1	-
100-150	3	3	1	1	4	1
151-200	1	-	1	-	-	-
201-250	1	3	-	-	-	-
400-500	1	2	-	1	-	1
501-600	-	1	-	-	-	-
<u>Total</u>	8	9	4	2	5	2

Note: Some women named more than one alternative source. Figures are actual

Source: Interviews with employed women.

6.7.4 Conclusion

Government legislation has gone some way in helping women in their quest for employment through the provision of maternity leave and benefits and the creation of day-care centres and nursery schools. It has, as yet, failed to do anything about the low wages that are paid by the new industries that predominantly employ women, and resists direct legislation to curb discrimination by sex over wage levels. On the whole the employers attitudes towards employing women were more favourable than was expected, although there was a clear distinction between Montserratian and ex-patriot employers; the latter exhibiting the more negative attitudes. The data on wages shows that there is some cause for concern about the number of women working for wages that, in some cases, are barely above subsistence levels and which certainly will not allow them to improve their standard of living. Hence, women are taking advantage of the new opportunities open to them but they are also at risk of becoming a disadvantaged workforce at the lower end of the wage scale.

6.8 Problems Women as Employees Face

This section will look at problems the women themselves identified and consider why problems that have been identified for other Caribbean women do not seem to be a problem for women on Montserrat.

6.8.1 Childcare problems

While childcare responsibilities are the subject of Chapter VIII, some mention is made of them here where they directly relate to employment. There are two day-care centres for children of working single mothers. Until very recently these centres were not available to married women and so they had particular difficulties in arranging childcare. The following extract from an interview demonstrates the difficulties women have trying to arrange childcare for their very young children while still trying to continue their career.

Interview 5:

"I have had problems with the type of people I have been able to get. I've had 5 people. The first one was very fresh, like I went home one day and found her sleeping on my bed, with the radio on very loud and the baby crying. I couldn't put up with that so I got rid of her. One got a better job after 2 weeks and I can't quarrel with that. The third used to be absent a lot and finally one day said she wasn't coming. The fourth was quite good and she was with me for about 7 or 8 months. She got married and her husband decided that this wasn't the work for her and so she had to leave. So now I'm on my fifth, she looks after her very well and things but the problem is that she doesn't come on time. So then I can't get to work on time and it affects my work and I'm not used to that."

Although this example highlights the difficulties of finding childcare for some women, in most cases what was striking was the responses which showed that childcare was not a major problem for many of the employed women. For many, female relatives, neighbours or friends would look after the children until the women returned home from work. In some cases this care was only necessary until the child was one year old

when they went to the day-care centre. The main problems of child care seemed to be confined to the professional married women, especially those who came to Montserrat on marriage and who had no maternal relatives on the island who they could call on for help with childcare. They also tended to live in the newly developed areas of Amersham and Olveston, rather than in the villages where they would probably have been able to get a neighbour to help. It was these women who mostly had to employ someone to come into their home and care for the children (Interviews 5, 36, 48,)

6.8.2 Job insecurity

This was a problem mentioned in Chapter III (Gill:1984) but it does not appear to be a major difficulty in Montserrat. There are no major multi-national firms on the island, although there are small-scale manufacturing plants, some of which are owned by ex-patriots, attracted by the various incentives offered by the Government. The women working for Sun Tops Ltd had all been employed by another clothing company which made jeans and t-shirts and went bankrupt in 1984. The women lost their jobs and some of them were then later recruited by the new concern. In the early 1980s Montserrat Industrial Enterprises which manufactured Montserrat Sea-Island cotton collapsed and the women again lost their jobs. When Montserrat Textiles was set up to continue the production they recruited weavers and spinners who had lost their jobs. They therefore had a trained and experienced workforce wanting employment. Until 1985 Johnson's had slack periods when they had to lay off workers and many of the 20 women interviewed had experienced such redundancies. Since then their positions appear to be much more stable as the production of the factory has expanded and the owner/manager hopes to continue the

expansion.

The possibility that new companies may not always be secure deters women from applying to new companies until they have shown that they are not going to go bankrupt or move out. Datapress was set up in September 1986 but was having some difficulty in recruiting employees. After Christmas 1986 the difficulty went and they found they had more applications than they could cope with. The manager of Datapress explained it thus;

"At first we advertised in the paper but we didn't have a very good response. Then we tried the radio and things improved but it still wasn't enough. After January it has all been by word of mouth, the employees take home applications for their friends. I think it was because they wanted to wait and see if we would come back after Christmas or if we were another 'fly by night' operation. Since the beginning of February we have had better applications as they see that the business is here to stay. We even have people applying to come from other islands and two women who are returning from England have applied to work here."

While the early 1980s showed some degree of insecurity in some areas of women's employment, the situation seems to have calmed down. Currently most of the employed women are probably more secure than their counterparts involved in large multi-national firms on other Caribbean islands.

6.8.3 Sex discrimination and harassment

The sacking of unmarried pregnant teachers and nurses was mentioned above. In addition there was a marriage bar where post-mistresses lost their jobs if they got married. These were both cases of sex discrimination. One of the nurses I interviewed had been a victim of such discrimination, she had to make a choice between her career and her marital status.

Interview 55:

"I didn't want to get married but I was pregnant. I was really forced into it by the matron and my husband's family. I didn't want

it, I didn't feel ready for it, I wasn't sure I wanted to marry him. I think they did it because it was a disgrace for a young nurse to be pregnant and not married. I had to marry him otherwise I couldn't be a nurse."

In her eyes the marriage has been the biggest mistake of her life and now after 18 years of marriage she feels that she is strong enough to go ahead with a divorce.

While the law, which forbade women to continue in their careers as teachers or nurses if they were unmarried and became pregnant, no longer exists there is still an unofficial policy that teachers who are not married and become pregnant should not continue to work in the classrooms once their pregnancy begins to show, usually at five months. These women are expected to leave the school for a longer period than their maternity leave allows so they receive no income for the period above the three months maternity leave. They are allowed to recommence teaching once they have had the child. The unofficial policy therefore means that women have to pay an economic penalty for following a pattern of motherhood that is the norm in the Caribbean. I was not given any adequate explanation for such practice except that it was felt that it could affect the moral tone of the school. I was informed by the Director of Education that this policy was under review at the time of the interview.

Sexual harassment was not something that any women mentioned. When I asked employers about the problem they either said that there was none, that they had not heard about any complaints or "that is not a problem here, it is only a problem in the developed countries." The fact that no-one mentioned the problem does not mean that it does not exist. However in all the time that I spent in places where both men and women worked together I did not see any cases of harassment as we would define it in Britain. There certainly were jokes between male and female members of

staff, and some of these were of a sexual nature, but both men and women seemed to be equal participants. Physical contact, on the few occasions I witnessed it in the workplace, was initiated by both men and women and never appeared to be unwelcome. I did not see any of the harassment similar to that recorded by Yelvington (1989) in the factory in Trinidad or recorded in the life stories of Jamaican women in Sistren (1986)⁹.

6.8.4 Conclusion

It appears that the problems faced by women employees generally in the Caribbean (as discussed in Chapter III) are not so severe in Montserrat. Childcare provision on the island is generally good and the friendships developed between women in the villages and links maintained with relatives means that there are a variety of sources for childcare that most women can call upon. As the island is so small, large multinational companies, notoriously insecure, are not attracted to the island in search of cheap female labour. The small size of establishments could encourage more harmonious relations between employees and so reduce the instances of aggressive harassment. It could also be due to the fact that most places of work either employ mostly women or mostly men and there are not many mixed workforces. Women are generally highly valued as employees and are treated with some respect. Women themselves demand such respect as they see themselves as making important contributions to the workplace and so will not tolerate behaviour that does not accord them the respect they feel entitled to.

6.9 Attitudes of Men Towards Women's Employment

This section will consider briefly what men think about women being employed. Both boys and girls were found to think that women should have paid jobs, but what do the older generation of men think? The two men interviewed in the village studies were both in favour of women having jobs. Jacob felt that there was a tendency for a woman to be attracted to a man only if he had money;

"The woman will more stick to the man for the money that he has. Yet if the man have money then he wants someone who won't spend and waste his money, that man would prefer to get some woman who has money of her own."

None of the women interviewed said that their male partners were against them working which is a different finding to that of Moses (1976). One or two women though did say that their partners, who they lived with, sometimes got annoyed about the time that the woman's job took. This mostly affected nurses but also one of the women who worked at Datapress on the night-shift. One ward sister described it as follows;

Interview 49:

"If he has come for me at 10pm when I'm supposed to finish, sometimes I'm in charge and handing over takes about $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour. So he comes at 10pm and then he would have to wait for $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour and he gets annoyed. Then the next morning I would be worrying to come to work for 8am and he would say I shouldn't be hurrying because of the time I left last night. So he gets annoyed about the job."

Another nurse had a similar problem with her husband;

Interview 53:

"He does private work and so everything he does he gets paid for, he tends to give his job priority, he thinks it's more important. My salary is paid to me every month and whether I go to work and carry out my work properly or not, I'm still going to get paid. He gets a bit cross if I'm called out to a patient in the evenings or if he thinks I'm working too hard over preparing some lecture."

In the case of the Datapress interviewee her co-habitee was not happy with her working a night-shift or the fact that she was now earning

more money than him. She had taken the night-shift job, along with good promotion in order to be able to spend more time with her two daughters. His response to this change was to begin seeing his other girlfriend more often. She knew that he went to see the 'outside' girlfriend while she was at work but that he was always at home when she arrived home from work. She had been unable to persuade him to stop seeing this woman, and if she complained he would just reply saying that she had her new job, she had her own money, maybe she did not need him anymore? This upset her very much because she had been living with him for six years and hoped they would marry and wanted to make the relationship work.

In a few cases the partners or the fathers of the women's children have used the fact that the women have jobs to stop supporting their children. The following interviewee clearly describes such an attitude;

Interview 76:

"My children's father sometimes helps, but sometimes if you have a job, the men, you know, they don't give you nothing. I don't live with him, he don't live with me, so he won't give me money to do whatever I want with. So only sometimes if there is a problem and I ask him, he may help."

These are somewhat isolated cases and for the 29 women who live with their partners most had the support of the men about their jobs. In a few cases this has meant the men taking on more responsibilities in the home and with childcare; it seems that this was a mutual understanding and none of the women mentioned the men being difficult about it.

Some of the women were asked if they felt that their having a job made any difference to their current sexual relationship. Below are some of the responses where women thought it made a difference;

Interview 20:

"I think it makes a difference. Even if your husband is working there are things that a woman might need and if you were to have to ask the husband, each time you want something you have to ask him, you wouldn't feel independent. So I think it's important because sometimes you see something down the road and you have money and you go and buy it. If you weren't working you might not have the

money, you have to go to him and ask. If they even give you an allowance and that is finished you have to go and ask again so you won't feel very good."

Interview 49:

"Yes I think it does. I wouldn't like to be at home and relying on his money, I wouldn't like it at all."

Interview 54:

"I think my working makes it more equal because I have my own money."

Interview 55:

"I think there is a problem because I earn more than him. He doesn't like the fact that I am in a higher position than him, I have a better job. He's only a mechanic and he doesn't have any ambition."

On the contrary these women felt that their having a paid job made no difference to their relationship at all;

Interview 17:

"I think if I was at home, without a job, we would still have an equal relationship."

Interview 46:

"I think our relationship would be the same whether I was working or not. If I wasn't working and relying on his wage, I might, well...it depends on the money and he's going to feel and knowing him, I think it probably wouldn't matter."

Interview 71:

"Well I don't look at it that way. From ever since, we try to make decisions together in an equal way, nobody try to be more important than the other."

Interview 97:

"No it was always the same for us. It depends on the husband. Some husbands don't like their wives to go out to work. But when they do go out to work they feel better because they see they get money for little extras."

What these examples show is that there is not always a positive effect or even any change in a relationship once the women begins to work for a salary. However while not all the men feel positively about their partners working, or feel indifferent, what is clear is that the women

themselves feel happier about being able to make a contribution and not having to rely on their partner's wage for everything they need and want.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, on the whole, the Montserratian workplace displays fairly equal patterns of gender relations. There is segregation by gender but within individual workplaces such divisions are neither rigid, nor organised in a way that disadvantages women. However, there are indications that the new industries which employ the less educated women, are creating a new tier of low paid women workers. This is an area which Government legislation has yet to control, but it has enforced other policies, (maternity benefits, a social security system, sick pay, childcare) which directly benefit female employees. In the professions women enjoy good working conditions and chances of further training and promotion. The differences in working conditions between the professional women and those employed in manual jobs can be great, especially in wage levels. The Montserratian female workforce is therefore not a homogeneous one, but there are similarities in the type of employment problems all women face. These are largely those of organising adequate childcare. Employers, on the whole, favour female employees for positive rather than negative reasons, although there is a considerable amount of stereotyping of female workers. However, perhaps the most important effect that the workplace has on gender relations is one of imparting to women the feeling that their independence is paramount, and that their involvement in the workplace is one way of maintaining it.

CHAPTER VII
WOMEN AND MEN IN LOVE:
THE GENDER RELATIONS OF UNION PATTERNS IN MONTSERRAT

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the nature of the union patterns on Montserrat. It looks at the census data related to union patterns and, more specifically, the distribution of union patterns of the women interviewed. Women's responses to questions about marriage, cohabitation and visiting unions are then presented. It draws on the findings of the interviews with 100 employed women and the detailed household interviews conducted in the study village. The terms used throughout this chapter when referring to the union types were defined in Chapter III. The three terms used are 'married', 'cohabiting' and 'visiting' unions ¹.

7.2 Figures For the Union Patterns

The following table shows the marital status of the population aged 15 to 64. It breaks the information down by gender and by years. It allows us to make comparisons of the rates over three decades.

Table 7.1 The marital status of the population aged 15-64, by sex

Marital Status	Males			Females		
	1960	1970	1980	1960	1970	1980
Never Married	63.9	58.2	67.8	63.3	54.9	61.8
Married	33.2	38.7	28.4	31.8	39.6	31.8
Widowed	1.2	1.7	0.7	3.5	4.4	3.4
Divorced	0.1	0.6	1.8	0.2	0.6	2.1
Legally Separated	1.1	0.6	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.6
Not Stated	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.3
Total Number (=100%)	2522	2540	3097	3450	2879	3255

Source: Caricom Census, 1980-1981, Montserrat, Volume 3, pp.35

The main trend that can be identified from table 7.1 is that there was a substantial rise in the proportions of men and women married during the 1960s. During the 1970s the rates fell back to their 1960 level or even lower. For example, if we look at the proportion of women married in 1960 and 1980, we see that it was 32%, but in 1970 it was 40%. While the

rates of marriage have fallen, there is a small but noticeable rise in the rate of divorces, from 0.1% in 1960 to 1.8% in 1980 for men and the matching percentages for women are 0.2% and 2.1%. The table shows that in 1980 only 30% of the total population aged 15-64 was married; more than 60% had never married. It would appear that the number of people choosing to get married is declining. If they are not marrying, what types of union are people forming?

Table 7.2 shows the range of union patterns in which women were involved at the time of the 1970 and 1980 censuses. (Unfortunately figures for the distribution of union patterns in which men were involved were not collected. This may be because it is more difficult to gather figures for men as they are often involved in more than one union.)

Table 7.2 Union pattern distribution of women aged 15-44

Age Group	Married		Cohabiting		Union Status Visiting		No Longer with Partner		Never Had Partner		Not Stated	
	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980
15-19	2.9	0.3	6.3	6.3	13.0	13.8	0.7	1.8	77.1	67.4	-	10.4
20-24	18.9	7.7	12.1	12.7	10.2	18.0	2.6	5.7	55.0	50.0	1.2	5.9
25-29	40.8	29.9	16.0	12.1	3.0	14.9	3.4	7.2	36.0	31.7	0.8	4.2
30-34	51.9	38.5	13.1	10.1	2.5	9.1	5.5	11.9	27.0	27.7	-	2.7
35-39	49.1	50.2	11.4	7.3	5.7	7.7	6.2	12.6	27.6	18.6	-	3.6
40-44	53.2	41.3	9.4	6.9	1.3	4.2	9.9	22.2	25.8	23.3	0.4	2.1
TOTALS	30.2	23.3	10.9	9.7	7.2	12.7	4.0	8.4	47.2	40.5	0.5	5.4

Source: Caricom Census 1980-1981, Montserrat, Volume 3, pp.38.

Table 7.2 above shows the percentage figures for the union status of women in both 1970 and 1980. What is most striking is the number of women who were defined as never having had a partner, 47.2% women in 1970 and 40.5% in 1980. The Caricom Census, for some reason, only registered women as in a 'visiting' union if they had had a baby during the previous

12 months from such a union. Therefore women who were in fact in a visiting union but had not had a baby in the previous year were assigned to the 'Never Had a Partner' category. I would suggest that most of these women do have a partner and are involved in a visiting relationship².

What is clear from the above table is that the number of women who are not married or who have parted from their husband is far higher than the number of women who are married and still with their husbands. The numbers of married women have fallen during the 1970s from 30.2% in 1970 to 23.3% in 1980³. The increase has not gone to the category of cohabitation as this has remained relatively stable (10.9% in 1970 and 9.7% in 1980). While the number of marriages and cohabitation unions have fallen there has been a slight increase in the number of women who have once had a partner but are now separated from them. In 1970 only 4% of women had separated from their partner; in 1980 the percentage was 8.4%. It is clear therefore that women are increasingly making the move away from an unsatisfactory partner. The decline in the number of women marrying has occurred through them either becoming involved in a visiting union or remaining single. Unfortunately, from the census data it is impossible to ascertain rates for these two categories separately. We can conclude therefore that women who are not getting married are choosing either to be in a visiting union or to remain single.

7.3 Current Union Patterns

This section considers the union status of the interviewed women as it exists currently and will also consider some of the interviewees' union pattern histories in more detail.

7.3.1 Union patterns: employed women

In Chapter IV the profiles of the employed women were shown and part of such profiles was their marital status or union pattern status. Table 7.3 shows the current union pattern distribution of the employed women by the type of employment.

Table 7.3 Union patterns by employment group: employed women

Employment Type	Union Type				
	Married	Cohabiting	Visiting	Single	Other
Agriculture	-	-	-	1	1
Clerical	2	-	8	1	1
Finance	4	-	11	-	1
Textiles	1	1	8	4	-
Teaching	5	-	2	4	-
Nursing	7	-	2	-	1
Technical	1	2	6	5	1
Manufacturing	4	3	9	4	-
Total	24	6	46	19	5

Note: Table shows actual numbers

Source: Interviews with employed women

Table 7.3 shows that the most common union type is the visiting union (46%). It involves almost twice as many women as the next most common union type, that of marriage (24%). The number of married women is only slightly higher than the number of women who declared themselves to be single and without a current boyfriend, although quite a few stated that they were 'inbetween' at the moment or that the relationship they were involved in was not serious nor of the visiting type. We can see that 76% of the women are not married. This figure is above the national figure shown in the census data which could have two explanations. The sample chosen could be biased against married women or the trend noted in the 1980 census could have continued and formal marriage declined. Both are possible. It could be that unmarried women are more likely to be

represented in the workplace although the number of women in paid employment has increased dramatically and has drawn women of all marital statuses into the workplace. It has not been selective against married women; in fact in nursing and teaching there continues to be a slight bias towards married women, especially in the case where they are mothers. The other explanation is that the trend noted in 1980 from the census results has continued and fewer and fewer women are choosing to get married. This appears to be the most accurate explanation because as we shall see below the women had strong explanations of their own as to why fewer Montserratians were getting married. The decline is not confined to the employed women but is true of all groups.

Table 7.4 shows the union pattern distribution of the employed women according to their age. The youngest married woman was 24 years old. She said that she felt that was quite unusual and that none of her friends were married. She and her husband married because she became pregnant and they both hope to migrate to the States. The rate of marriage remains fairly constant throughout the age groups reaching a peak in the 31-35 year group of 7%. Contrary to earlier Caribbean studies discussed in Chapter III, there is no evidence of more women getting married as they grow older. The highest number of women in visiting unions is found among the age group 21-25 years at 24%; this age group of women accounts for over half the number of all visiting women. Women in this age group are at their peak of sexual activity and almost all of these women have children. Although there are only small numbers of women in the older age groups it appears that age does not really have any influence on the union type the women will choose to become involved in.

Table 7.4 Union patterns by age group:employed women

Age group	Union type				
	Married	Cohabiting	Visiting	Single	Other
>20	-	-	2	4	-
21-25	2	4	24	6	-
26-30	5	2	11	4	-
31-35	7	-	5	1	1
36-40	3	-	3	1	3
41-45	3	-	1	1	-
46-50	2	-	-	1	-
50+	2	-	-	1	1
Totals	24	6	46	19	5

Note: Numbers shown are actual

Source: Interviews with employed women

7.3.2 Union pattern histories

Here I would like to consider some of the union pattern histories of some of the interviewed women, both in the workplace and in the study village.

Interview 59:

"I got married because I got saved and I wanted to live a Christian life. I used to have boyfriends before so I asked the Lord to send me someone who would be right for me and then I met my husband. We were together for some years but we didn't live together."

This woman had had boyfriends in visiting relationships and had her first child with a visiting boyfriend. On her conversion to the Jehovah's Witnesses she finally married a man after having a visiting union with him for some years.

Celeste:

"I didn't have marriage in my mind because I used to love out going, I used to love dance, you hardly find me home when there was a dance, going to the movies, visiting friends and so. I had a boyfriend in another island and I make a child with him. We lived together then but he always used to bring other girls home while I was there and I couldn't stand that, so I ran away and came here to Montserrat with my child. Here I met another man, made another child but he was married. Now I had two illegitimate children and they weren't for the same fathers. So I said instead of getting involved with another person, it's better to settle down and get married. Because sometimes you get another boyfriend and when you think he is concerned about you and the children, he's just really

concerned about you for sex wise...After my husband came and I didn't know him. He just saw me one evening going along the road, and I heard him call me, so I went up to him. He say that he see me and that he likes me, so he's interested in me. I tell him that I presently with someone and that me and him are not vex, we haven't broken up but that he was a married man. I said I would have to think it over, he said to think it over because he would like to make me his wife...After I went home, I studied it and I said that it's best to take the offer and see what comes out of it. But I made him to know that I have two children and that I'm not going to let my children be here and I am there, anywhere I am going they must come with me. So he accepted those terms and we got married in about two weeks!"

In Celeste's case her main concern was not to be caught in a cycle of boyfriends, pregnancies and abandonments, so she accepted this rather bizarre offer of marriage. Unfortunately she says that she has regretted that decision ever since. Clara had a similar history with four children with three different men and her last three with her husband. Her decision to marry was equally pragmatic and unromantic, but her marriage has been more successful.

7.3.3 Stability of unions

There is a feeling in the Caribbean literature and in the analysis of the Caricom Census that the increase in visiting unions means a decline in stability of union types. I would argue against this because, while I found that most women were involved in a visiting union, in many cases these unions were of a long duration and the current boyfriend was the only boyfriend many of the women had had. Just because the union most practised does not involve a residential union should not lead to the conclusion that such a union must therefore be unstable (Rodman 1971:56). What is clear is that in the sample there is a degree of variability in the type of union adopted. Some of the women have stable relationships that are non-residential (interviews 7 and 33). Other women are single,

either because they are 'inbetween' partners (interviews 69, 76 and 37) or because they do not wish to be involved with anyone at present (interview 61). Some of the married women are very happy in their relationships (Interviews 5, 36 and 49) and some are not (interviews 24 and 55). Some women have found the marriage so intolerable that they have either got a separation (interview 52) or a divorce (interview 78). Two of the divorced women have boyfriends but are quite happy with the arrangement and do not wish to re-marry (Interview 3 and 34). I found a similar pattern to that of Powell (1982) in that most of the women appeared to be quite happy with the current union pattern in which they were involved. The interviewed women also felt, in most cases, that if they so wished they could change their union pattern to another form either with their current partner or with another one, as so candidly explained by the following woman;

Interview 64:

"I have a boyfriend and we visit each other. He have other girls. It's not a problem. I don't feel anyway. Okay, I was living with one guy, eh?, my last child's father and okay because of that experience and so, my mind, like when you put a cake in the oven and it's bake, my mind set. We parted because he was going out with other girls and making babies and comes back in the house at night and lies down and turns his back on me, so it didn't make sense for me to stay any longer. Now I can speak with 2 or 3 guys and there is no problem because of the way I have them, the position that they are in. The third one's position cannot touch the second one, and the third and the second one's position cannot touch the first. I just have one personal man I really love, but I have other guys that I speak to, they can help me with a problem but they are not a lover for me. I would only have sex with one man because that's my stationary boyfriend and if he's good at making love I do it. If he's not good, well, I make it with the other one! Because why? It's my body and there is no man that is in charge of my body."

In the village interviews Vivette had a similar attitude although she preferred to develop her relationships with men who were not Montserratians and probably had a higher turn-over of partners.

7.3.4 Conclusion

The sense of independence about the kind of union they wanted was shared by both these women and others. The gender relations at play in each type of union appear to take different forms. It appears that the women choose each type of union according to what they feel is right for them at that time, and which type of union they feel it is best to enter with any particular partner. One man may be the ideal visiting partner but not someone they would want a residential union with. Another man may prove to be a good cohabiting partner for a certain amount of time but not the right person to marry. Marriage is much more permanent and less flexible and is not a union type to be entered into lightly. The impression these women gave was that they were not forced into any form of union but rather that they chose a particular type to suit their needs at that time. They are not the 'victims' that many commentators sited in Chapter III would have us believe.

7.4 To Marry or Not to Marry?

In the interviews women who were not married were asked if they would like to marry and their reasons for their response. Married women were asked why they married and how they felt about their decision now. First let us consider the responses from the married women.

7.4.1 Married women's thoughts on marriage

Among the employed women there were 24 who were still married, four who were legally parted from their husbands and one widow. In the village, three of the eight women were currently married and one no longer lived with her husband but was not legally separated. In section

7.2.2 Celeste's response about her reason for marrying was given; it was a similar reason to why Clara married. When asked how she felt about her decision now Celeste replied;

"If I knew then what I know about him now I would never have marry to him! I say every day I would not have ventured there. Maybe it's because he's much older than I am, you see, he's 17 years older than me, so there's a big gap. He always try to keep me down and he don't let me do the things that I want to do, but if he want do something is no way I could stop him!"

Ruth's reason for getting married at first appears quite straightforward;

"I got married when I was 34. I got married to my husband because I love him and he love me."

Later in the interview I learned that her only daughter was not her husband's child so I asked her why she had not married her child's father and this amusing story unfolded;

"Probably because I didn't love him enough, I did love my husband more. Or probably because he did not say about marriage and I did not ask him. But then I didn't ask my husband about marriage but after we were together about two years he said maybe it would be best to get married. He was in the church. He was there one day and he come and tell me what the sexton did say to him. He say he hear my husband was in love with me and that he was a collector in the church at that time and that he cannot collect if he has a girlfriend that he is not married to. So he come and tell me and I tell him, well if they don't want you collect, you not collect because me not keen on no marrying! He asked me why, he say it would make me live better. But me say, tch, me not want that! I thought I was too young to marry and I went and took a ticket to Antigua and I let him know that I was going to Antigua. He took the ticket and rail it up, and he tell me me not go. He say you can't maintain your mother from over there and if she's sick who going to look for her? I say that me sister down at the Hill and she could look for her, is her mother too. He say no and he tear the ticket right up. He say here's the money and he give me the 10/-. Me go right back to the office and tell them me lost the ticket but me couldn't get no more. I never got to go to Antigua. Then we got married!"

Despite her initial reluctance to marry they are still happily married after 30 years and are a respected couple in the village.

Bertha is separated from her husband, although not legally. I asked her why she got married and where her husband was now;

"I just decided that the time was ready to marry, I was 36, I just

feel like getting married. I made 4 children for my husband I lose two and two live. Marriage is good if you meet the right person, but if you meet the wrong person it's difficult for you. My husband isn't the right person. I'm happy being on my own now. I come to live here on my own, I live here for 16 years. He live just next door, over there. I see him sometimes, I see him when he passing here and I see him when I go to church or to the pasture. He always asking me to take him back and have him back again but I don't want that. He's no good to me, he had his chance and now he's lost it. Me better off on me own, eh?"

Of the 24 married employed women only two stated that they were unhappy with the relationship. One was interviewee 55 (the other, number 24) who has been mentioned in Chapter IV because she was forced to marry on becoming pregnant or lose her job as a nurse. She is now contemplating divorce but her case shows what a difficult decision it is for a woman to face:

Interview 55:

"Really I think we should have got divorced a long time ago. I didn't because of lots of reasons. Partly I was afraid to go off and be on my own. Partly because of pride, I suppose I don't want to show everyone that I have failed. Divorce is still a stigma. Also I felt that it would be difficult for the children so I have hung on and I feel that I have wasted a lot of my best years. I'm thinking about doing it now though, I don't think I can stand much more, and I feel strong enough now."

The remaining 22 women said that they were fairly happy in their relationships. There were four main reasons as to why these women got married: because they loved their future husband and wanted to share their life with him but not cohabit (interviews 5, 20, 32, 35, 36, 39, 45, 48, 50, 53, 90 & 97); because they wanted to have a family and felt they should only have children when they were married (interviews 17, 46 & 49); because they fell pregnant (interviews 44 & 54); or for religious reasons, usually upon their conversion (interviews 59, 71 & 84). Below are some example responses;

Interview 48:

"I met this guy and we fell madly in love. I was in St.Kitts and he was in Montserrat and we found we were spending quite a lot of money on flying to see each other and telephone bills. We decided it would be better to be together. We planned to get married down

later in the year, but when I got pregnant we brought the date up!."

Interview 46:

"I think first of all if you want to have a child you should be married because it's not nice bringing up a child by yourself. I think children need a father, I think the two parents should be together, it's good for the children and it takes the strain off the one person. Marriage is more permanent than living, stuff can go wrong, but at least you have a bigger commitment, with living together the guy can just get up and go at any time."

Interview 54:

"Because I had my first child and that speeded things up. He was very glad that I was pregnant and he wanted us to get married. I've been married for 22 years."

Interview 71:

"It was the best thing to do rather than living and having children, it's better. I was studying to become a witness and in order to have a clear conscience with God we decided to get married. We were living together before we married and we had two children before we got married."

Only four of the women are divorced or separated, below is one woman's explanation for her divorce;

Interview 3:

"I got married at 21 because it was the thing to do I suppose. When I see him now I know if it was now I wouldn't even have dated him! We got divorced because we just couldn't make it, he was something else. We had been married for three years and I divorced him on the grounds of cruelty. He still maintains his child."

This woman is undergoing a trial separation from her husband;

Interview 52:

"Why did I get married? I don't really know why! I can't give a special reason, I thought perhaps that was what was expected of one when you...growing up you are not supposed to bring in babies when you are not married. I had one already and then...I don't know why I got married, but we did! We are separated now, I don't know if it is permanent. It's because of incompatibility, that's why. I'm not really sure that I would want to go back. I think for my sake and his sake and for the children's sake we don't want to get back together again and be separated again. I don't really go in for divorce unless you have to, I'm not even thinking about that."

Even where women are already separated from their husband the final break is hard to make, divorce remains a social stigma in Montserrat.

7.4.2 Unmarried women's thoughts on marriage

The women who had never been married (71) were asked whether they would like to marry and then asked for the reasons for their response. The tables below show the breakdown of their answers (figures are percentages of the totals shown). We can see from table 7.5 that almost 60% of the unmarried said that they would like to get married. If we combine this with the women who said that they would like to marry but at a later time we find that 70% of the women want to get married. Only 21% said that they would not. In view of what we know about the trend of declining numbers of marriages these responses are quite surprising and leads us to ask not only what the women's reasons for wanting to marry are but also why the desire does not match the reality. In the Caribbean there is an awareness that visitors from the West, especially the USA and Britain, often make moral judgments about the Caribbean way of life and in particular the low rates of marriage and high rates of illegitimacy. I would argue that many of the women I interviewed felt that there was a 'right answer' to my questions about marriage, that is, that they should want to get married. I suspect that in conversation with other Montserratian women about the same subject those same women would have given a different response.

Table 7.5 Responses to the question: 'Would you like to get married?'

Yes	No	Maybe	Yes, but later	Don't know	Total
59.2	21.1	2.8	11.3	5.6	71

Source: Interviews with employed women

The three tables below show what the women said about their reasons

for answering either that they would like to get married or that they would not.

Table 7.6 Why would these women like to get married?

Companionship/ for love	To have children	To have a family	Security	The proper thing to do	Respect- ability	Religion	Total
38.2	27.3	14.5	7.3	7.3	1.8	3.6	42

Note: 13 women gave more than one response: calculations from 55

Table 7.7 Why marry later?

Marriage/ husbands too much work now	Happy alone	Too young	Pursue ambitions	Need a home	Total
33.3	22.2	11.1	22.2	11.1	8

Note: 1 woman gave more than one response: calculations from 9

Table 7.8 Why not get married?

Like to be independent	Men are no good	Happy alone	Marriage brings too many problems	Total
36.4	31.8	22.7	9.1	15

Note: 7 women gave more than one response: calculations from 22

Source for tables 7.6, 7.7, 7.8: Interviews with employed women

Tables 7.6, 7.7, and 7.8, show us that most unmarried women give quite idealistic, romantic reasons for why they want to marry, followed by the desire to have children within marriage and creating a family unit. These are very similar to the reasons why married women said that they had married. Marriage being secure, the proper thing to do and respectable are not such important reasons. This is surprising in view of other Caribbean studies which argue that women especially desire to marry for the security and respect it gives them (see Chapter III). Unmarried

Montserratian women seem to give their own personal happiness priority.

Of the women who said that they would like to marry but were not ready for it yet, the realisation that marriage and caring for a husband means a lot of work and responsibility is their main reason for wanting to wait. For the women who know now that they do not wish to marry the desire to maintain their independence is their strongest reason, although this is closely followed by their ideas about men and marriage, "the men them are no good".

Below are some of the responses from the women who want to marry;

Interview 43:

"For companionship and I think certain things in life one needs to have someone they can turn to for advice, I think you can find that in a mate."

Interview 98:

"I think especially for my children. I think they should grow up in a home with their parents, especially boys, they need both their father's and their mother's influence."

Interview 23:

"I think I'd love a family life, apart from just working, I think I'd love to have a family and a husband."

Interview 22:

"Because I think it's nice to have someone to share in the responsibility of the children, I think it's nice if the child can grow up around the father, and for security too. It's more secure in that the two of us can contribute to buying more things."

Below are some of the responses from women who would rather wait a while before they marry;

Interview 14:

"Not right now because, right now, when you have a husband you get too much of responsibility. I'm living with my mother, if I have a husband I would have to do everything, wash, cook, iron... all myself. Now I live with my mother and we share it. When I think about getting married I have to think about a lot of work and responsibility. I'm not afraid of work, you know, but I'd rather wait."

Interview 9:

"First of all I think I'm too young and second, I want to go into fashion designing and getting married now is not the right thing to do. I have to go to college and study. In a few years when I've

finished college and stuff like that it will be much better for me, but not right now."

Finally some of the reasons put forward for not wanting to get married;

Interview 41:

"Women in marriage get the raw end of the stick eh? You make all the compromises, I don't know what it's like in England, but here in Montserrat it seems that the woman is the one who makes the compromises and has to organise and shop. I'm doing that for myself now, I'm not too sure that I want to do it for somebody else, I mean why should I? I suppose if I find a good relationship and for the person's piece of mind they want to get married, I may, but to me it's not something I'm running after. I really don't have much to lose by not getting married, coming this far, having my education, building my house, having a child already, what else is there?"

Interview 2:

"Well the cost of going with men mean it's better to stay alone. You get married and after 1, 2, 3 years they depart and so it's better to stay alone. Some men get on so funny, so my idea is that it's better to be by myself."

Interview 100:

"Before you get married you are nice, he's nice, but after you get married you just fall out."

Interview 33:

"Sometimes when I look on and see what is happening...you have to really assess everything on its own merit, but sometimes when you look at the married couples and see that they are going through so much pressure, depression, the worries, sometimes you wonder if yours would be on the rocks. I have friends and with the problems they have, they cannot sleep, they cannot go here, they cannot do this...and it makes me think whether I should get married. Also I have been independent for so long I think it would be very difficult for me to adjust."

The employed women therefore demonstrate a mixture of ideas about whether they personally would like to get married. The number of women answering in the affirmative was rather surprising. As we shall see later, when these same women were asked about their ideas about marriage at a general rather than individual level their responses were quite different.

In the village the four unmarried women said that they would probably like to get married in the future but only if they found the

right partner and they were not really too worried about it. I think they were more honest in their responses because I had discussed the issue more with them. They knew my own ideas about marriage and did not feel that they had to present any particular type of image in the interview.

Violetta said that she would like to get married at some time in the future. She has a child with her boyfriend and he would like them to live together for a while and then get married. Although she is a strict Seventh Day Adventist and the ministers of her church tried very hard to persuade her to marry after the birth of her child, she has refused. She loves her boyfriend and would like to marry him but feels that she is too young at 19 and is enjoying her independence. She likes her job, she loves being a mother and she argues that she wants to enjoy this time of independence while she can. Hence despite considerable pressure to make her marry, Violetta is determined to make up her own mind when she chooses.

Vivette felt that she was too young to marry yet at 24 but that one day she would like to marry and have a family. However there was one thing she was adamant about;

"I would not marry a Montserratian. No way! No way! I don't like them, they don't know how to treat a woman. They don't know how to treat you like a lady. A stranger have more manners, they not going to disrespect you. Montserratian men don't care, they have no respect."

Mayetta also felt that marriage could be right for her when she was older but that she was quite happy with the way things were;

"I have a partner now and that partner is not in favour of getting married. I wouldn't want to get married either, because you...to me the same things that you can get being married, you can get them from being single with that same person...The marriage is just the name to be changed to say you are Mrs. John or whatever and you get a ring. Some people don't even get a ring! It doesn't change anything to me."

The two men interviewed were asked the same questions about marriage. Jacob said that he would like to get married because it is the right thing to do but has no immediate plans to marry his current girlfriend, at 30 he felt he was not ready for the married life. Samuel felt strongly that being married would 'cramp his style';

"Well that's a very big question because to be married, right, is sort of bounding yourself. I'm young, 24 years, right, and to get married at that age you might go out there and see a woman you love, right. I'm a man who like to look at people and admire them. I don't want to hurt anybody. If I get married my wife might be jealous so I just try to keep out from that."

7.4.3 Conclusion

On the whole, whether the women were in favour of getting married or against it, a healthy scepticism was apparent. The women seemed to feel that the gender relations that came along with marriage could be very restricting unless they found the right partner. The desire to remain independent and not be ordered about by a demanding husband featured strongly in arguments against marriage. The women who wanted to marry stressed their desire to have companionship and someone to share their life with, as well as the desire to build a family. They wanted to get married for the advantages it would bring, but unless they found a man they could be sure of then they would not marry just for the sake of being married. There are alternative union types through which they can enjoy the company of a partner but not be involved in the restrictive gender relations that marriage often brings.

7.5 Why Are There Fewer Montserratian Marriages?

This section will deal with the responses to the question, "Why do you think fewer people are getting married in Montserrat?" The question

aimed to find out why people thought the rate of marriages was falling but also to ascertain what women thought about marriage at a general level. When asked about other people's reasons for not marrying, or why other people's marriages failed, the women seemed less guarded in their answers. I would argue that more of their true feelings about marriage came to the fore and they were much more critical of marriage and Montserratian men.

This question stimulated some of the longest and most articulate responses of the whole interview, with most women, (80%), giving an answer. The explanations offered covered the following general themes:

- 1) That people see other marriages in difficulties and so they do not want to get into such problems themselves.
- 2) That men cause a lot of problems in marriages, either because they are not loyal to their wives or because they illtreat their wives.
- 3) Women prefer their independence and they do not want to be restricted by a husband.
- 4) That people are afraid to make a commitment and they want to be free.
- 5) That there is a shortage of eligible men and that many men choose to marry women from overseas.
- 6) That women make it very easy for the men to use them because they spoil the men and give them everything as they want it; they do not demand what they want for themselves.

Almost all of the 80 responses are interesting reading as the women present strong arguments about what they think are the problems with Montserratian marriages. However, there is only the space to present a selection of responses which illustrate the above themes.

Interview 3:

"It seems out of every 10 marriages you don't really have 2 good ones, people tend to look at that and they get scared, I don't know. It's nice to have a companion, but I don't know if I want to

get married again. Because I had a very bad marriage, and I look at my friends around me and they are together, but that is it. It's only because of the children or the mortgage, financial commitments or what people would say or the church, but inside there, there isn't really a relationship." ⁴

Interview 18:

"The men them, they eye are very long! The men them look plenty women, eh? and to me being that they love too much a woman, they not sure. Say a man have two ladies, two girlfriends and he doesn't know which one to choose, rather than hurting either party they won't marry to either one, so they don't do it."

Interview 33:

"Marriage have problems. They have financial problems, for instance their husbands are not giving them money to run the house. Or you find that the husband have other girls outside and is creating problems, not coming home, not doing his duties, those sort of problems. Most of what I've heard it's the men who are the problem in marriage. After a while when they married they take things for granted, they say, "okay the wife is there, you are the wife, you should do this and you should do that." No little compliments or anything, what they used to do before they got married they no longer do it, it's hard for the women."

Interview 55:

"I think because the men don't take on their responsibilities, they don't take it seriously. Also even though you are married the men still play around. Other people will look at that and think, well why get married when he will behave so badly? My husband has played around a lot, other women have made children for him while we have been married. I hated that, I felt shame, as though everyone was watching me and laughing after me. Now I don't let it bother me. I have no respect for him and I don't let anything he does hurt me anymore. Women tend to push themselves on married men so the men can just go off with whoever they choose." ⁵

Interview 41:

"I suppose it has to do with female independence, it could be that. At one point, somewhere along the line, men did everything to support women and I think now you have a lot more qualified women who don't have to depend on men. I think the men themselves fear the trend and I know a lot of independent women and I know a lot of marriages have broken up because they are too independent. they don't ask the men for anything, they can buy whatever they want and I think the men fear that. Men, on the whole, don't want to get involved in marriage with women who are independent." ⁶

Interview 46:

"I don't know if people have anything against it as such, they may think, well, they are young, they need a bit more time, they want to be free. They don't want the weight of commitment, some people don't want marriage, the ties, the responsibility. Some people can't take it." ⁷

Interview 7:

"Because the eligible male population is very small and we find that a lot of the local men go overseas and get married, for whatever reason, I don't know. I'm not happy about it at all, because I feel that...you see it happens that the men who are progressive men, who go out and get training and come back and find a better job, they want to bring in strange women. I feel if they were to sort of get tied to a woman it should be a woman from the local community who he can uplift and build up, rather than bring in a strange woman."

Interview 35:

"What I find is that a lot of the men don't marry Montserratian women. The men get married but not to Montserratian women. I don't know why. Some men I've spoken to say that you find a Montserratian woman is friendly with a man and she will sit there hoping that they will get married, but they say that women from the other islands are much more aggressive, because they want to be married and they tell them, "I want to be married!" The Montserratian women move in and relax and hope, they never say what they would like."

Interview 75:

"I think one reason is that the ladies give the men bad habit by living with them, and they would stay with them for years, 10, 12 years and then they don't marry them. They end up marrying somebody else! The guys then get into a habit, they get a girl, she has to wash, cook, clean, do everything for him and then he doesn't need to marry because that's already being done. Then after a while you hear that they go and they take somebody else to marry. You end up being left and they don't respect you."

What emerges from these responses is that marriage is frequently seen in a negative light. It is seen to cause many problems for the people involved and others are afraid to get themselves into a similar situation. The attitude of men to marriage is strongly criticised. Men are seen to be irresponsible and to treat the women unfairly, particularly when they have other girlfriends outside of the marriage. Some of the married women even went through the anguish of knowing that their husbands had fathered other children with these women. I disagree with M.G.Smith (1962:32) where he states that women accept their husband's infidelity and may even give him advice about his affairs. I found that the women hated the idea that they may marry a man and that he would continue to have other girlfriends and that the married women who

had experienced this situation were always hurt by it. Although the women may be realistic in accepting that husbands will probably have affairs, their realism does not prevent them from getting hurt or feeling ashamed as they know other people will ridicule them. Interviewee 32 had very strong ideas about fidelity in marriage and said that she had to be vigilant to try and stop anything before it developed⁸. She argued that she could understand why some husbands found other, unattached, women attractive when their own wives were busy with children, working both at home and in their own career, often feeling too tired to give him the kind of attention he may need. However she argued that the wife too might like a change, the chance to meet someone new but she does not have the time. Perhaps if husbands helped in the home more the married couple could share more of their time together.

At the general level the women were much more vociferous about their feelings about the problems with marriage. They feel that the gender relations in most marriages are organised in a strongly patriarchal fashion which means that marriage brings an advantage to the men but not the women. Other studies argue that women desire marriage for the stability and respect it brings (Blake:1961, Moses:1977, Roberts: 1975, Smith, R.T.:1956 and 1975). Montserratian women do not share those ideas. At a personal level, stability and respectability do not feature as strong reasons for wanting to get married. At the general level the women clearly felt that marriages are not stable and that because the men behave so badly in marriage the respect does not exist. People do not respect the commitment two people have made to each other and the men do not respect the women enough to carry through their own commitment. Marriage is seen to be a site of patriarchal gender relations.

7.6 To Cohabit Or Not To Cohabit?

In Chapter III authors were cited who argued that cohabitation was part of the 'stability progression' forming the middle stage of the movement from visiting to marriage (Henriques:1953, Simey:1946, Smith M.G.:1962, Smith R.T:1956). Others have shown that in many islands and communities such a neat progression does not exist and many women never enter a cohabiting union, either prior to their marriage or at any time (Brody:1981, Damm:1987, Freilich and Coser:1972, WICP:1986). In Montserrat the number of cohabiting unions is very low; in 1970 it accounted for 10.9% of all unions and in 1980, 9.7%.

7.6.1 Cohabitation: employed women

Legally a cohabiting woman has very few rights but, as women did not place a high value on the relative security that marriage could offer, this may not be a prohibitive factor against cohabiting. In the sample of employed women only six of them are currently in a cohabiting union although more than that have cohabited at some time. A few of the married women also cohabited for a short period of time before they got married. The women were asked what they thought about cohabitation and whether they would do it themselves. Over half the women (54%) gave answers and their responses are considered below.

Table 7.9 Attitudes towards cohabiting unions

Total number of responses	Agree with it/ have done it	Disagree with it/ Have never done it	Have cohabited but not happy about it
54	24.1%	70.4%	5.5%

Source: Interviews with employed women

The table shows that 70% of the women who answered the question did not agree with the idea of a cohabiting union. Only 24% of the women agree with the idea of cohabiting as an acceptable form of union, have done it themselves, or both. The remaining 6% have cohabited but only for short periods of time and in each case before they were married. Let us now consider what some of the women said about cohabitation. Firstly, those against:

Interview 20:

"I was brought up in the Catholic church and I was taught that it's not right and my mother said it's not right. She always said that if you are not married to a man you shouldn't be living with him."

Interview 25:

"Before marriage? I don't like this idea of 'shacking up' and even if I did my mother would kill me!"

Interview 33:

"I personally wouldn't do it. I think it's amoral. I don't think you should live together unless you are married. If you could live together I think you could get married."

Interview 75:

"No, I don't think it's right. I would end up being a maid for him and then he kick you out and you may have 2 or 3 kids for him and nobody wants to marry someone with so many children."

Interview 93:

"It's not the best thing, it's a way of advantage taken of someone. For instance, I live 20 years of my life with a man, now he leaves me at 40 years, and when you catch yourself he runs off and married to someone else, it's a heartbreak for you. It would lead you not to trust another man."

These women clearly feel that there is something sinful about cohabiting, that their mothers would strongly disapprove and that it puts women in a very vulnerable position. The following interviewee, number 24, felt that there were more people choosing to live together now because of a fall in moral standards combined with a lack of respect for what older people would have to say about it:

"You find a lot of people living together say, 'well the only difference between me and you is all you are doing is wearing a wedding ring'. they don't look at it from a moral standing, a religious standing, they are just enjoying life and they figure,

'well I have a man and you have a man, so what's the difference?" Before times people thought it was a crime to live with a man, as they call it, 'shacking up', but nowadays people don't question people so much. Before older people would see two people living together and they would call one and talk to them about it but now they don't dare! People just get wayward and they do it. I feel if you live with a man he takes advantage of you, to me I feel they never really want to get married. In rare cases you find the man turns round and he marries the lady, most of the times he moves out and marries someone else because they want something fresh!"

Anxiety about giving a man the best years of their life only to have him then abandon them and marry another woman is a strong, and it appears, a well founded concern of these women.

Three women lived with their current husbands for a short time before their marriage. Interviewee 35 did not feel as strongly about cohabitation as her mother did and it was her mother's distress that encouraged her to marry sooner than she would have done for herself;

"My mother is a Christian and we always went to church and she taught me the things that I was always taught. I didn't really feel so bad about it but I know that she was quite upset about it, and because of that she wouldn't visit the house. She would call to me but she would stay outside and call and I would have to go outside and talk to her, I didn't really like that."

Interviewee 53 is not a Montserratian and she lived with her fiance for a few weeks while the marriage arrangements were being made. She found people reacted in a negative way and she points out the double standard that exists;

"We lived together, not for very long, a few weeks. It was frowned on by certain members of the community who had been friendly to me and given me support when I was here before for a year. Rather respectable people who thought that the appearance of it was wrong. One of them actually said "it was alright if you were out all night and came in at 5am but to have your clothes hanging side by side it doesn't look good because you are a stranger and you are supposed to set an example." This was interesting, showing a particular attitude in Montserrat, a double standard really. They don't mind you sleeping together as long as nothing is said but they don't like you living together."

Below are some of the responses from women who felt that there was nothing wrong with a cohabiting union;

Interview 23:

"I think it's an individual's choice. If you feel that you love someone but you don't want to make that commitment of marriage right away and you feel to live together, I think it's up to the individual. I would live with my boyfriend if I felt that it was in my best interests."

Interview 41:

"I don't see anything wrong with it, I mean except from the moral point of view, but if people get on well in the relationship I don't see anything wrong with it. Would I do it? No, I don't think so, I think of it from my son's point of view, I don't want anyone coming in and interfering with our relationship. Maybe later on when he's older, I may think about it."

7.6.2 Cohabitation: study village

The village interviews showed a mixed reaction to the question.

Both Violetta and Alice felt that it was not the proper thing to do;

Alice;

"Well, I'm against that. I always feel that if they agree enough to live together then we agree enough to get married. I don't believe in this living thing at all."

Samuel and Jacob thought that there was nothing wrong with it as long as the two people could get along together;

Samuel;

"I think there is nothing wrong with that, as long as you could make it, that's what is good."

Celeste had mixed ideas;

"I'm not against it really but sometimes I believe that's why many a time the woman is left to wonder why she live all these years with a man in common-law business and eventually the man get tired and go out and take up somebody they just see for one or two months and marry to that person, and leave you there, even that it was you living together those years. So I'm not against it but I don't like how the men be. Some men when they have enough of the woman sexually, they get tired and they start finding fault and they just go. Sometimes it's better to have a man longing to see you than to be with you!"

7.6.3 Conclusion

In general the attitude towards cohabiting unions is not a favourable one although there are women who are in a cohabiting union and are quite happy with it. The dislike of this kind of union is on two grounds. First is the feeling it is not the 'right' thing to do, that if people wish to live together then they should make it legal and get married. Second is the vulnerable position it places women in and the social censure they suffer. Men, it appears, are not criticised about their participation in a cohabiting union and they benefit from it, which explains why the men in the village interviews were in favour of it. Women stated that as a married woman there would be certain types of male behaviour that they could refuse to put up with; if they were cohabiting with that same man they would have to tolerate it. A cohabiting union is seen as more restrictive than a visiting union but without any of the legal and social benefits marriage can bring. The gender relations in a cohabiting union are seen as more patriarchal than they are in a marital union. Women are disadvantaged in many ways as cohabitees while men can only benefit.

7.7 To Visit Or Not To Visit?

The visiting union is the most common union in which women are involved in Montserrat; 46% of the employed women are currently in such a union. Within this union category there is a major division. In some visiting unions the partners will stay together in one of the households for the whole night and awaken together; in the other type one of the partners will leave before or at dawn. In their discussions of visiting, the women made this distinction quite clear, "yes he visits me but he

doesn't stay for the whole night." It appears that if a man stays the whole night then the couple would be on the verge of being classified as cohabiting, and as we have seen above that carries a negative image. In most visiting unions it is the man who visits the woman, but not always. His visit may be during the day or night and may or may not entail a sexual liaison. Where the couple have children together the visit will also serve the function of allowing him to spend time with the children.

If a younger woman is still living at home it is common practice for the visiting man to call and then the couple 'walk out' together. Where a woman still lives with her parents or mother he may stay in the house only if the family approve of him and if the union has been in existence for some time.

A man may ask his visiting partner to perform some household duties for him such as washing his clothes or cooking a meal. However it is not seen as the woman's duty as it is if the couple are cohabiting or married. Women may occasionally do such things for their partner but only when they choose to and they would be annoyed if it became expected. The men would be expected to either look after themselves or get their female relatives to help. A visiting boyfriend would be approached for financial assistance, especially for the support of children.

Visiting unions may be of a very short duration or long-term and stable, with children resulting from the union. The visits are often frequent, either daily or at least two or three times a week. They can be terminated easily by either party. Some unions split up for a period of time over an argument. The partners may then both begin new visiting relationships but later rejoin the original partner, sometimes years after parting. When visiting unions are dissolved the partners may still keep in touch with each other, especially if they had children together

who the man may still visit and support.

Women benefit from a visiting union because they remain in their own household and so maintain the autonomy that was discussed in Chapter V. They have a companion and sexual partner but do not have the burden of performing domestic services for him. They also have someone they can turn to at times of financial need. They are more likely to receive support for any children the union may have produced while the union is still in existence. However, some women complained that men tied the support of the children to sex and that even when the union was over the father would demand sex from the woman in return for the money.

The negative outcomes of such a union for these women is that the man can come to the house when he chooses and that can make it difficult for a woman to have any other male friends around to see her, whether there is another sexual union in existence or not. Often a visiting man will not tell his girlfriend when he is going to visit her for that reason; to catch her out if another man is visiting her. I found very little evidence which indicated that many women did have more than one visiting partner at the same time. In cases where a woman was discovered to have more than one partner the punishment could be a severe beating. Men in visiting unions, on the contrary, would frequently be visiting more than one woman and space out the visits through the week. In some cases each woman visited would have a child with the same man, often being pregnant at the same time. Where the women visited lived in the same village any confrontations between them could often be quite aggressive.

7.7.1 Visiting: employed women

Let us now consider what the employed woman said about visiting

unions. Only one of the women interviewed did not agree with visiting as a union because she only believed in having sex within marriage. Other women agreed with visiting but not staying overnight. A few of the women would like to spend the whole night with their boyfriend but were unable to do so because of their parents. Some felt that visiting was acceptable if you were living alone but that if there were children around than it would have to be handled very carefully. Here then are some examples of the responses;

Interview 9:

"He comes by me sometimes. He doesn't really like to stay overnight because he respects my parents and he doesn't believe in that. I see him every day."

Interview 19:

"We visit each other. I don't really want to live with somebody if I'm not married to them, it's just something in me. I see him about once a week or so."

Interview 22:

"I go and stay with him, I see him about 6 days in the 7 days of the week! I go and see him and then rush back home before the sun comes up. There is trouble with my parents, they don't approve of our relationship. It used to blow up but they have stopped now, they have got tired of making noise."

Interview 25:

"Yes we visit but not overnight, not that I've never wanted to though you know! I don't because for one the religion and mummy for another. You have to respect your mother and though deep down you think that it is alright, just to please my mother, I wouldn't do it. My brother doesn't either. We just have to get home quick. You know you get going and then you have to get up and leave, I hate it, especially when it's raining! I'd love to wake up with him."

Interview 26:

"I go and visit him, I used to stay overnight but I stopped because he has other girlfriends, but I still see him. Sometimes I feel jealous but now it doesn't worry me because he's not going to change. He always denies that he has someone else but people tell me and sometimes I see him when he doesn't see me."

Interview 31:

"We visit, but staying the night meaning leaving the next morning, is that what you mean? No, no, I see him on weekends and about three times in the week."

Interview 33:

"Well it depends on where you are living, if you are living with

your mum or you have kids around I think that should not be encouraged, to sleep over night, but if you are living on your own, well okay, it could happen occasionally."

Interview 93:

"Visiting I would accept, but living with him and being there cooking his food, washing his clothes and you not married it's not right. I don't have a boyfriend here because in Montserrat I don't think the guys are serious. They seem to want your body and once they got that they gone, that's the way I look at them, they are not serious in a relationship."

During the interviews I became puzzled about the number of women who had boyfriends, were in a visiting relationship and had had children with that partner but always stressed that he did not stay the night. I was curious to discover when these woman became pregnant. I asked interviewee 49 when she thought the couples had sex;

"Most times it's in the nights, they stay the night most of the time, people will say they don't but they do. It depends on where they live. If it's a country relationship most times the men will visit the women. He may visit and then has to go home or something like that, mostly I think they stay the night. I think they leave very early in the morning. If ever you go jogging or go certain places, you see them all leaving, and you can watch to see who is coming down the road, heavy with sleep!"

This was indeed the case as I found whenever I returned home from a party in the early hours of the morning, there were always men walking along the road-side, asking for a lift back to the village where they lived.

7.7.2 Visiting: village study

All ten of the people interviewed in the village were either in a visiting union themselves, (Jacob, Samuel, Vivette, Violetta, Alice and Mayetta) or they thought that there was nothing wrong with them. Mayetta had the following to say about visiting unions;

"Sometimes they will come every night, sometimes they only come on weekends, or they come every night but they don't stay overnight, just come and go back home. Mostly is the men visit the women, the women visit occasionally, say maybe on a Sunday afternoon, to his place and he follows you back home, maybe on a Sunday or a Saturday. Men do most of the visiting. Some of the women are kind

of shy to visit him, if he lives with his parents they are kinda shy to visit, so he must go to visit her!"

Alice was a little more cautious about the idea of a visiting union;

"Spending the night could be interpreted in many way, because spending the night could be you sit around and you talk and around 11pm or 12 he goes. Well, to me that's fair enough, but when it comes to sleeping, I don't like that, I'm against that."

Samuel had no such reservations;

"Well, I think everybody should be able to visit their partners whenever they feel like."

7.7.3 Conclusion

Many women see a visiting union as a way to have the companionship and affection of a lover without the burden of having to perform domestic duties for him. They also maintain their own independence and autonomy within their own household. Visiting unions are seen as less restrictive because the partner is not present for much of the time and so cannot control the woman's activities in the same way as he could if he were living with her. Those in a visiting union are perceived by the wider community to be relatively free agents and their public behaviour is not kept under such close scrutiny as it would be in the case of cohabiting or married women. However the freedom accorded men is much greater and while it is accepted that he may visit more than one girlfriend this is not the case for the women. A visiting union is seen as less of a tie and is much easier to dissolve, on both parts, than any other kind of union. Despite some inequalities the visiting union does not display gender relations in such a patriarchal form as do the other types of heterosexual union. This is probably why it is the most popular form of union for Montserratian women and why most children are born to such unions.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there is a variety of union patterns in which Montserratian women are involved. The most formal and only legally recognised form is marriage but this only involves about 30% of all adult women and the number of people getting married appears to be falling. While marriage does offer security in a legal sense, for many women it symbolises a loss of their independence and involves them in a patriarchal form of gender relations. Many of the women said that they were in favour of marriage at a personal level but given the opportunity to discuss marriage and husbands at a general level they were very critical. Marriages do not appear to be very successful and while it remains difficult to get a divorce the numbers are steadily increasing.

Cohabitation is the least popular form of union and has a very negative image. For many women it means the giving up of their independence without any of the advantages that marriage brings. It is seen as the most patriarchal of the three unions.

The visiting union is one whereby women can retain their independence and yet have the comfort of a partner. The gender relations in such unions are far from equal but they are not as patriarchal as the other two union types.

At a general level it appeared that most of the women interviewed were happy with their current union and that they felt able to change it if they no longer felt comfortable with the arrangement. However it must not be forgotten that women and men do not benefit equally from these unions. There is a strong double sexual standard in Montserrat, as in the Caribbean as a whole, and women are the losers in such a situation.

CHAPTER VIII

WOMEN, MEN, SEX AND CHILDREN:

THE GENDER RELATIONS OF HETEROSEXUAL BEHAVIOUR IN MONTSERRAT

8.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the nature of the gender relations that constitute 'heterosexual behaviour'. This is the term used to cover aspects of behaviour involving sexuality and biological reproduction. As sexuality and biological reproduction are such large areas of study this chapter is divided into four major parts. This is an artificial separation, imposed in order to deal with the complex areas which constitute this area of social organisation. However, it is important to remember that sexuality and biological reproduction are closely interconnected.

The first part, 8.I, will consider definitions of sexuality, masculinity and femininity, the sexual double standard, and attitudes towards the opposite gender, that is, those parts largely concerned with sexuality. Part 8.II looks at aspects relating to biological reproduction; contraception, abortion, and sexual education. The third part, 8.III, will investigate issues surrounding children - the outcome of both sexuality and biological reproduction. It will consider attitudes towards children and the responsibilities of childcare. The final part, 8.IV, presents information about the means through which the nature of heterosexual behaviour is maintained. It considers social censure and violence related to gender. The information which forms the basis of this chapter was collected through both the interviews with women in employment and in the study village and also through participant observation both in the village and throughout the island. A considerable amount of the information on sexuality came through casual conversations with Montserratians who had become my friends but who had declined to give me a formal interview.

PART 8.I Sexuality

8.I 1 Definitions Of Sexuality

From Chapter III we learned that in most cases the man is seen as the dominant figure in definitions of sexuality and that sexuality is defined in heterosexual terms. In some islands there are definitions of sexuality that include women's sexuality, recognising that the mutual enjoyment of both men and women was an important aspect of heterosexuality. In the interviews with employed women direct questions about sexuality were difficult to ask because of the time restriction and also because it was the first time I had met many of the women. It was a little easier in the interviews in the village but it was not an area that everyone was willing to discuss¹. The two men interviewed were both quite relaxed when discussing questions about sexuality but I had to strike a very fine balance between making it clear that I was asking questions for the interview and not because of my own sexual interest in them².

8.I.1.1 Heterosexuality

In trying to ascertain information about the nature of sexuality on Montserrat I had to ask direct questions about what people thought about sex and sexual behaviour. The following quotes are given as illustrations of how the definition of male and female sexuality on Montserrat was established.

When asked who he felt was more forceful about sex, Samuel answered;

"Well at times there are some women who are real forceful, especially when they really want sex, but I suppose it's mostly the

men. But like with me and my girlfriend, there are times when I come home from work and I'm tired, I will just lie down and she will just have to come and turn me on. So if she wants to do that she will do it."

I then asked him who he felt enjoyed sex the most;

"Well if there is a difference between the man and the woman, that means there is no real thing going there. I think we should both enjoy it the same amount if you are making real good love."

Samuel said (in fact he assured me!) that he knew what to do to make a woman enjoy sex as much as he did and that as far as he knew he had never had any complaints. He was proud of his sexual ability and although he was cohabiting with his girlfriend made it quite clear that he found other women sexually attractive and that he was available for sexual affairs.

Jacob was less open in his discussions about sexuality but was still more open than the women were. I asked him who he thought enjoyed sex the most;

"Well men think about it almost all the time because it is a serious thing. The men enjoy it more because of the relief the men feel, because sometimes the women never feel it. The women then they never so interested, so men always feel happy even though the woman doesn't always feel happy."

He therefore felt that men got more out of sex. Unlike Samuel he did not seem to think it important if the woman did not enjoy sex as much as he did. Jacob also admitted that although he would discuss sex with his current girlfriend, in the past he;

"just did what I enjoyed and I didn't really worry about how she felt."

I asked Celeste the same question about the enjoyment of sex;

"Sometimes you could say the women, I don't know because it's between both parties really, but sometimes some men are only doing it for doings sake. Sometimes the women go to the extremes and they enjoy it more than the man. But some men only do it like, what do you call it? very forceful like, there is no real love between you, animal like. You see sometimes you may have ideas to improve it because I may find that I'm not getting enough satisfaction. But if

I bring up the subject he may feel that I have another man, so sometimes I end up being silent."

Celeste makes it clear that while she may want to improve her own enjoyment of sex she would fear her partner suspecting that she has another lover and so would remain silent rather than risk his jealousy. Her own sexuality is therefore subordinated to her partner's. Celeste therefore, has ideas about her own sexuality and what she finds pleasurable. It is quite another thing, though, for her be able to put her ideas into practice.

Alice too felt that while some women can be forceful about sex she felt that men were more forceful in general. She also felt that men enjoyed sex more because they had nothing to lose and so they would come on much stronger than the women.

Violetta felt that in 75% of cases men were more forceful about sex but felt that the enjoyment side depended on how good the partner was and that both should enjoy it. These women feel that men take the initiative more in sexual matters and that they tend to get more pleasure from a sexual liaison. While some felt that they could discuss sex with their partners there was also the worry that he would want to know where they got their ideas about sex from and that he would become jealous.

In Chapter III brief mention was made about myths concerning sexual practice and pregnancy. In a conversation with one of my neighbours about her children I asked her if she wanted to have any more and what she was doing about contraception. It proved to be a case where her fear of getting pregnant again and her lack of understanding about contraception allowed her cohabiting partner to exploit her fears in a way that gave him maximum sexual pleasure and denied her any pleasure;

"No, me feel that two is plenty, me just stop at that. But me not take nothing because me no like the drugs them and me can't get with nothing else. Me just do it the natural way. Tobais tell me

that if we does do it fast then me not get pregnant and if only one of us come then me not get a baby. So now we does it fast or he comes but I don't. I don't like to do it that way because it doesn't feel so good for me but it's better than making another baby."

Women who were very open about sex and discussed it as freely as men would in the rum shops and on street corners were labelled as 'whores'. These young women were easily identifiable because of the way they dressed: short skirts and tight blouses. I was warned to keep away from them if I did not want to 'ruin my reputation'. I did manage to spend some time with these women, although I had to be quite discrete and they never came to visit me in the village, 'don't want to ruin your work out there' they told me. These women were very certain about their sexuality and demanded what they wanted sexually. Men that failed to come up to their expectations would be ridiculed in the street, their sexual ability denigrated for all to see. However, the opinion of these women was not taken really seriously because they were 'wutless'. They discussed sex and men often. Once, at a festival in one of the Southern villages, Linton, Athena and I were sheltering from the rain in a truck owned by some friends. Linton asked Athena if she was still with her most recent boyfriend. She laughed and said;

"What, that boy, Adolphus? No man, me think he one anti-man, he can't do nothing to make me feel good. Him cock so smally me could hardly see it! And boy! His hands just like bananas, useless! Him just like one chil' always wanting kissing and nothing else."

Linton said that she was a hard woman to please;

"That's not true. A man could make me feel good very easy, all he have for do is eat my pussy! Yes, man is true! Me just die for that!"

Far from being embarrassed by her conversation Linton remembered what she had said and used it against Adolphus in an argument they had later about

Linton spending so much time with a 'white woman'.

Within Montserratian heterosexuality, sexuality is defined in male terms. While all women appear to have a clear idea of their own sexuality and what they find pleasurable, very few have the courage to be open about it like Athena. For most women what they can do and ask for is determined by the men. Any indication of them wanting to improve their sex life is seen by their partner as evidence that they have been having sex with another man. In order not to arouse jealousy women have to 'keep quiet' or be very careful about how they introduce the subject.

8.I.1.2 Homosexuality

During my stay on the island I did not see any openly homosexual couples, although there were known couples living in the ex-patriot areas. While couples were not necessarily identifiable, homosexuals were pointed out to me. There were also arguments in the streets between known homosexual and heterosexual men. Often their sexuality would not be the source of the argument but would be used as an insult. Homosexual men were known as 'bull-men' or 'anti-men' and young boys would often tease other boys calling them these names if they had not been seen with a girl or had tried to initiate a relationship with a girl but had failed. It was also a term of abuse that women would use to humiliate a current or past partner. The use of such terms indicates that Montserrat, at least the heterosexual male population, is a heterosexist society. For example I was told by Linton about a boy he had been to school with, who the other boys had thought was a homosexual;

"The boy was a bull-boy, he didn't like to go with girls, he preferred to be with boys all the time. One day a group of us took him down to the Bay and we wrestle there with him. We duck him in the sea and hold him down long time, like we was going to drown him. But that treatment did cure him because now him alright, now him have girlfriends and so."

Men who were known to be homosexuals were avoided by the younger men who wished to maintain their heterosexual 'status', especially if they had not 'proved' their sexual ability through having numerous girlfriends or fathering a child. Older men had already proved their heterosexuality and were more tolerant of homosexuals, passing time with them in the rum shops and at domino games. I found no evidence of any discrimination against homosexuals from employers or the church. It would appear that there was no formalised discrimination but that at the individual level the animosity could be severe. However, homosexual relationships were very discrete and not at all in evidence in the public sphere. This could have been because they were known and tolerated if they 'kept themselves to themselves' or because they risked abusive treatment if they could be identified.

Homosexual women were called lesbians or flappers. It was less common for homosexual women to be pointed out to me. Thus it appeared that there was less public knowledge about who was lesbian. However, when the subject was mentioned then the attitude towards lesbianism varied. Men seemed to find it difficult to accept whereas women accepted the idea and the women concerned more favourably. In one instance I was sitting in the town and was joined by the brother of a friend. We talked and then he pointed to a woman;

"See that girl there is my other sister. Me hate she, me no check for she or nothing. That girl there she dirty, she a lesbian, she does bring shame on the family and me no talk to she at all, not me, me just spit in the street if me see she come along."

In contrast to Niam's reaction, the other sister, who I knew well, had never mentioned that one sister was a lesbian and seemed to have a good relationship with her.

In my interview with Vivette I asked her if she knew any

homosexuals and what she thought about them;

"Some people think it's nasty. I don't care whether you are a homosexual or a lesbian, unless you molest me! I don't have friends who are lesbian but I know some gay men. There are very few lesbians but we have a lot of gay guys, people know more that men are gay than women are gay. They talk more about a man who is gay but women usually just look like two girlfriends. One time I had a problem with a lesbian. She used to talk to me in the shop where she works and she used to tell me that I have nice legs. I used to joke with her and so, I used to laugh it off because I know that she is married. I asked her if she could braid my hair and she tell me to come up by her house. When I got there she tell me that she have something to show me in the back room. So when I go in the bedroom now, the girl fighting me on the bed and throwing me down and so. She's big, you know, she's a big fat girl and she try to get me on the bed and she wrestle with me like a man. So I took up the lamp that was there and I hit her one blow on the head and I knock her out. Me know she not dead because me not hit her that hard. You know though, she didn't even start my hair she just try to get me down straight away!"

In telling this tale there was no animosity about the incident but rather humour. The indignance that there was came from the fact that the woman had not even braided Vivette's hair!³

8.I.1.3 Conclusion

In general, sexuality on Montserrat is defined in favour of male sexuality and heterosexuality is seen as the norm. There is some realisation among some men and women that the best form of sexuality is one where both men and women gain equal sexual enjoyment, but in many cases the man's sexual desire is seen as paramount and the woman's sexual wishes are subordinated; the women's sexuality is covertly and overtly directed by men. Women do have a sense of their own sexuality but they are often forced to ignore it or keep quiet about it. Women who do not keep quiet and dare to make sexual demands for themselves are labelled as prostitutes and socially ostracised. These definitions of what is acceptable sexual behaviour is bound up with the definitions of masculinity and femininity, which are discussed below. Heterosexuality is

therefore patriarchal. There is a fair amount of tolerance towards homosexuality as long as homosexuals do not interfere with heterosexual individuals. There is a strong belief that everyone has a sexuality and sexual desires, but these desires have to be exhibited in acceptable ways, ie. in ways that heterosexual men will tolerate.

8.I.2 Masculinity and Femininity

Concepts of masculinity revolve around both heterosexuality and biological reproduction, those of femininity revolve predominantly about the bearing and raising of children. However, it is important that women only have children at the 'right time'; pregnancy in teenage girls is not seen as part of being a 'good woman'. Sexuality has been written out of Montserratian definitions of femininity because sexuality for Montserratian women is defined and restricted by men.

8.I.2.1 Masculinity

Part of being a 'real man' in Montserrat is to have a number of sexual relationships at the same time. This applies to all men, whether single or married, although it is less overtly condoned in the latter case. Men are also seen to have strong sexual desires that need to be satisfied. Samuel was asked what he thought about men having more than one girlfriend at the same time and whether he had done it himself;

"I would think that the man is a stud! I don't think anything is wrong with the man or it's something wrong. If he is married then maybe he should cool out a bit, but a person like me, it's not doing any harm to have two girls...If I am on the street and I have a girlfriend but yet I meet another girl, it's very seldom that I won't say anything to that girl. If I say something and see there is a way in which I could move in, most naturally I move in. I'm that kind of man. Once one girl I had found out about another one. She was annoyed, I was annoyed because of the

way she reacted and got on, she went fussing herself up and then I got annoyed and I left her⁴."

Samuel feels that to be a man he must be free to have as many women as he desires and a woman who tries to prevent him from proving his manhood will not be tolerated. Jacob admitted that women in such a situation might be upset but felt that many women had no choice but to stay in the relationship;

"The woman don't feel good at the time, but they have to stick with it because of what the man will do for them, they don't feel good within themselves at the time, but it's kind of compulsory to stay with it."

A way for men to earn prestige through their dominance of the heterosexual relationship is to show that they have had a sexual relationship with a woman by getting her pregnant. Siring the child is the important part, not being a father to the child as it grows up. Some men will therefore aim to get as many women pregnant as possible, brag about the fact that all these children are theirs and yet do nothing to help the mothers raise the children. This is becoming less common, particularly with the wider knowledge and use of contraception, but some men still feel that they are not a real man until they have fathered a child⁵. Jacob said;

"In a relationship, the man wants to have the baby more because he might not intend to take it but because it is something he can show... The public can see, the man can show it to the public... Some men try to get a woman pregnant on purpose. If they don't love the woman they will say anything to make it happen...maybe they don't love the woman as such, they just want her to have a child."

Samuel felt that the fathering of children was an important part of being a man. It was again the siring of children rather than the raising of them that was seen as the most important;

"Well, if they reach their 30's and 40's and still haven't made a child I think we should gather them together, take them to the doctor and cut out the seed and throw it to the dogs, because

they are wasting their time or something, man! What's the matter with them? "

8.1.2.2 Femininity

For women, femininity was gained through motherhood alone. Women wished to have children to show that they were 'fruitful' (interview 18) and so 'real/good' women. Vivette felt that it was important for a woman to have a child, especially her first child;

"I don't think it's fair not to have a kid, at least one. I think it's important to have a kid. If you are pregnant the first time you shouldn't throw away the child because you may not have a chance to have another one, that's the only one that you could have."

Although she felt that it was very important for a woman to have a child she would not criticise women who had not been able to have children even though they had wanted them. She did feel though that if a woman couldn't have children she should at least informally adopt a child from a family where there were lots of children so that she would have the experience of raising a child. In contrast to masculinity, femininity comes from the bearing and the raising of children; from being a good mother. When women had deliberately chosen not to have children and had not informally adopted children then the condemnation from other women could be severe. Such women were seen as selfish and career-minded and while they might be at the top of their profession, they were not seen as successful because they had never had the experience of raising a child. Celeste told of a local woman receiving criticism because she had not had any children;

"Women who don't have any children? Well they will curse you! I have seen it happen. At the school the headmistress haven't got any children and if she beat your child without a cause, sometimes the parents go and tell her, curse her because she don't have any. They tell her 'open up with this and that and go and make a child!' So sometimes they get a lot of persecution through not having any."

For women, therefore, the way to achieve femininity is to have a child and to bring that child up as well as possible. Having a partner, getting married, gaining economic independence or their sexuality are secondary sources of femininity. If these are achieved without or at the expense of having a child then social criticism may have to be endured.

While femininity rests upon biological reproduction, having a child at the wrong time brings a negative response. Girls who become pregnant as teenagers, especially while still at school, can expect to be punished by their mothers and other relatives. Often such punishment can be a severe beating. The girl is judged to have tried to 'be a big woman too soon', to have wanted to prove her femininity before she was mature enough to cope with the responsibility it brings. (The problem of school-girl pregnancies is discussed below.)

8.1.2.3 Conclusion

Concepts of masculinity and femininity can be said to complement each other. To prove they are 'real men', men want to demonstrate their sexual prowess and father children as a public declaration of that prowess. To prove they are 'real women', women want to have children. However, in order for men to reach masculinity women's sexuality must be subordinated to theirs. Women can be high achievers in their careers, have successful and stable relationships, be respected members of their community, but if they do not have or raise children they do not achieve 'femininity'. Therefore femininity in Montserrat is determined by and structured around Montserratian masculinity.

8.I.3 The Sexual Double Standard

It was much easier to get everyone interviewed to discuss this aspect of heterosexual behaviour because it is an aspect that is experienced by many women and causes them considerable distress and upset. The employed women were asked if they thought men had more than one girlfriend at a time, why they thought they did, and how they felt about the situation. Like the question about marriage at the general level, this question evoked lengthy and often impassioned responses, with almost all of the women having very strong opinions about the subject of male infidelity. Table 8.I.1 shows the range of their responses;

8.I.1 Why do men have more than one lover at the same time?

There are more women than men/ not enough good men	They are greedy/ they want lots of women	Machismo/to prove they are a man/ peer pressure	They want a woman in reserve to go to	
24	43	41	9	
Some women throw themselves at men	Women need the money/they accept it	Tradition/ socially accepted	Human nature	Don't know
7	8	12	3	11

Note: Some women gave more than one response, figures shown are actual numbers.

Source: Interviews with employed women.

It is clear from the table that the women put the blame firmly at the feet of the men accusing them of being greedy, lustful, egotistical and macho. The women said that many men felt that they were not a real man unless they had lots of girlfriends and that they liked to boast and show off to their friends. Some women felt that other women made the

situation worse by 'going after' the men who already had girlfriends. Interviewee 31 likened it to the situation where everyone crowded into 'La Cave' disco, one of two discos in the town of Plymouth. The other disco may be empty but still everyone tried to get into La Cave because they thought that it must have something that the other place lacked. She said it was the same with men. Once they had a girlfriend and they seemed to be happy together other women wanted to get in there to see what that man had that made her so happy. Unable to resist the temptation of so many girls wanting to be with him the boyfriend would then have lots of women while another man may have none. Below are some quotes taken from the interviews which illustrate the reasons given in the above table;

Interview 7:

"Maybe it's because the eligible male population is so small and there are so many women wanting a man, so I suppose the man knows that and he goes after more. Women need a man too, you know, we are only normal! I think I share mine, I think most Montserratian women have to. It doesn't bother me anymore, when I was younger it used to. Now it doesn't because as you get older you appreciate the problems that exist and secondly I'm not so pressed about the marriage thing."

Interview 75:

"Greedy maybe, they like to have a taste of every one they can. You hear the fellas say that there are more women than men, there's not enough men to go round. So you find fellas with 2 or 3 girlfriends. But what I notice from growing up, it's a thing here with the men to have as much women as they can. As they get older they cut the amount, they might start out with 5 or 6 and cut down to 2 or 3. Then they marry and have a wife but still have a keeper, I can't stand that. I always tell them, if you want to do it, do it, don't let me know. If you want to have a keeper as well as me, well forget about me. I wouldn't share if possible."

Interview 5:

"I think they think it gives them some sort of status, you know, that is what makes a man, in their thinking, if they can count out how many women, then they have arrived."

Interview 6:

"More than one? because they have charm and charisma and they approach other people and they get through. Men often do it because it helps their ego, you hear them say 'Oh, you are quite a guy, man, you have 5 women!' I think some of the women admire them and it starts pretty early, that sort of male dominance, it's taught to

their children. Even now people tell my son, 'You are so handsome, you must be able to get lots of girls.'

Interview 15:

"I think they like to show off, in the sense that they say, 'well my friend have 2, I'm going to show him that I can get more.' They just feel that women are there to use. They boast about it, I think it's nasty, horrible."

Interview 56:

"Probably it's because they think if the girlfriend gives them some problems then they can go over to the other one."

Interview 18:

"There are 5 or 6 women to every man and so the women have to share, and a lot of women if they see you and a fella moving cool, they want to know how you are so cool together, so they want to jump into the relationship. So sometimes the man don't have to look women, the women look them. The women want to see what make you so happy and the men them can't back down because the women will call them anti-man or something like that, they have to take the challenge to save their face."

Interview 45:

"The men them get in because they might own a car. The girls thumb a ride and they have to give him sex to pay for it. Sometimes it's unemployment, the men can't make it, so they offer to pay the girls a dollar and then they can do it. I don't know, it's terrible."

Interview 36:

"I think it's a Caribbean/West Indian men thing, because over the years they have always done it and society accepts it, so they do it but I hate it."

Interview 40:

"Peer pressure, growing up in a society that says, 'Hey it's alright, you can have lots of women if you want.' It's a great thing, they get patted on the back. I don't think it's necessarily bad, I just think it's unfair of them to want to do that when they want their women to be faithful to them. I don't like the idea of double standards. I don't think society should have one set of standards for the men and one for the women. I don't think anybody could reason it out and say why a man should do that and a woman shouldn't, they just say, 'a woman shouldn't.' I think it's unfair, I think in a relationship they should agree to have the same kind of sexual behaviour."

While other studies have identified a similar sexual double standard stacked in favour of the men, few studies have investigated how the women felt about the situation. In Montserrat many of the women had experienced such behaviour from their male partner; others stated that if

they found out that it was happening to them they would probably leave the man concerned. Some women suspected their partners had other women but decided to put up with it through rationalising about how well he treated them in other ways. If a partner gave adequate support to the children and sometimes to the woman herself, if he visited her regularly and took her out to places, if he did not drink and become violent, if he generally treated her in a caring way, then the woman may decide that his infidelity was bearable. Such pragmatic decisions frequently mean that a woman will stay with a man she knows has other women even though the idea causes her considerable distress;

Interview 47:

"I have this problem with my boyfriend, how do I feel? Well, lets put it this way, he's not married to me and he has to live his life, when he reaches the end of his rope he will realise his mistake. He has about 3 girlfriends, he shares everything equally, we can all use his car. I know the other women and I have a good relationship with them!"⁶

If his infidelity is combined with other negative points then it can be the breaking point of a relationship.

Interview 66:

"He would always deny that he had other women, but I knew that it was true, he had about 4 different women. He knew when I was coming so he was safe. He wanted to order me about but I wasn't for that...He was always telling me about I have this man and that man, I couldn't take it...They accuse women of doing it when it is they who are doing it."

The whole situation of male infidelity made the women both angry and upset. However it was not the double standard that upset them but rather that the men who they loved should still feel the need to have someone else at the same time. They were made to feel inadequate, inferior and insecure. The men on the other hand gained considerable prestige and self-assurance from the situation. In this marked double standard the men gain at the expense of the women. Women are both the

prisoners of a social system which condones such behaviour and of their own desires; they would like a loyal partner but know they will find him almost impossible to find. The sexual double standard is the arena where gender relations take on a patriarchal form and women lose out to men in every situation. They can do nothing about the infidelity; they cannot stop being hurt by it; if they complain to the man they are seen as losing face; if they are not aggressive to the other women involved they are ridiculed⁷. While Montserratian women direct their anger about the situation at other women, Montserratian men will continue to play them off against each other thereby controlling the situation.

8.I.4 Attitudes Towards The Opposite Gender

The two genders are expected to behave in different ways and their masculinity/femininity are in opposition to each other. Men benefit from a sexual double standard which places women in a subordinate position within the arena of sexuality. Let us now consider what men and women think about each other.

8.I.4.1 Women's ideas about men

We have seen above that women do not like the way men behave in sexual relationships and on the whole women have a negative attitude towards men. Vivette had very strong feelings about why she disliked Montserratian men;

"I don't really want to talk about Montserratian men! They don't take care of women, not at all. They have a girlfriend but they just use you. They use you for sex and try to fool you. They tell you they in love and they tell you to stay home tonight. Then, for instance, if you don't stay home and you go out and see them with another girl they want to beat you up! They beat **you** up! They want you to stay home and let them get the opportunities to go out with another girl. I don't stay home, I don't let that happen

to me. I don't think the women should do it, unless you are married to a man, I think they don't have any hold over you."

Celeste had little respect for her husband and felt that he was demanding, selfish and violent. She found Montserratian men in general to be coarse, harsh and unreliable.

Alice felt that men would use women for sex;

"Men always seem to be the boss about sex, they always direct the traffic about what to do, where to do it and when...Some of them use the women for sex, especially if they ask you and they can't get you, some of them just trick you and tell you all sorts of colourful things about you and, you know, fool you, and by the time they leave and you longing to see them again you find they don't really love you. When they do it like that they boast and spread your name around the village."

Of Montserratian men in general she had this to say;

"Well, they should be more courteous, some of them are very crude and rough. Some don't know how to love...some of the men, they are not affectionate at all."

Violetta and Bertha both said that they always felt that Montserratian men were trying to dominate women.

Through the interviews with employed women the general attitude about men which emerged was that they they were irresponsible and not to be trusted, that they would always do exactly as they wanted to;

Interview 14:

"Well I tell you right now, in Montserrat you can't tell the guys what to do, If they have a girlfriend they deny it, they may have 2 or 3 and they tell you it's only you they have. So sometimes you just can't trust them so you just have to do your own thing, and when you see them getting out of hand leave and go by yourself. Montserrat men always think ahead, always think of having children, think of having more girlfriends. A lot of them just go and drink and stuff like that, so it's best to leave them to themselves."

The women generally disliked men and were contemptuous of their behaviour. They realised that if they got a partner who treated them well they were lucky. Good men were seen as the rare exception rather than the rule. This could be another explanation why women chose to have visiting

relationships; when one man's behaviour became intolerable or unreliable they could find someone else who would possibly treat them better.

8.I.4.2 Men's ideas about women

The two men interviewed did not have very strong feelings about women in general and they certainly did not have the lengthy criticisms that the women levelled at men. Jacob felt;

"Some women try to see all what they could get, they make a heap on the side, they have a little store of money to keep for themselves for when they are by themselves. A lot of women are deceitful and they have to be checked all the time."

Samuel said he was choosy about the kind of women he would get involved in because some women are only after a man because he has a job and can give them money;

"I would like a woman who is calm, friendly and I like girls who are not too vulgar, I like girls who just take things easy and don't make a fuss."

Both these men talked of women who are potential partners, that is women they could have a sexual relationship with. However, in Chapter V, the development of close relationships between mothers and sons was discussed and men would talk about their relationships with their mothers in quite a different way. Linton was very close to his mother and would frequently tell me that he loved his mother more than any other woman. He told me that his father used to beat her but that as he and his brother had grown older they had forced him to stop as they would fight with him if he attempted to touch her. If he was ever troubled by anything or needed help he would always go to his mother. His four sisters no longer lived on Montserrat and he would often say he was glad about this because he did not have the worry of making sure they did not shame the family by breaking the social rules about sexual behaviour. Also he did not have to

worry about protecting them;

"You see that boy there? Him have plenty trouble because his sister is shaming the family by the way she carry on with the men them. Him try for control she but she no listen. I so glad that my sisters away in a foreign because they can't bring no shame. I know what men are like too and I would always have to protect them from the bad men them, is plenty trouble to have sisters."

Early one morning in the village a violent argument raged between two young men. People gathered around to watch and while the language was aggressive there was no fighting. One man had insulted the other's mother using sexually abusive language. The woman's son defended her honour as though it was his own sexual status he was protecting. I never witnessed arguments in which a boyfriend protected his girlfriend's honour with quite such intensity.

8.1.4.3 Conclusion

Women are therefore much more disparaging in their discussion about Montserratian men. In a pattern of patriarchal sexual relations this is to be expected; those subordinated will be critical of those dominating. However, it is important not to see these women always as victims because many women see men for what they are and will work hard at manipulating a situation to their advantage. Montserratian men tended to fear women who were quick thinking and outspoken because they worried about being tricked and then publicly ridiculed about it. However, such a fear was only directed against women who were potential sexual partners. They held their own mothers in great respect and would always defend them against any insults. Many men form their closest and most enduring relationship with their mothers.

8.I.5 Part I Conclusion

This part has consider the nature of sexuality in Montserrat. It has shown that sexuality is clearly defined in terms which benefit men, that is in patriarchal terms. Women are aware of their own sexuality but are rarely given chance to demonstrate it. Women who do so, suffer strong social condemnation, but in their own words, they 'have much more fun!' Masculinity and femininity are constructed around these definitions of sexuality; masculinity depends upon sexual prowess and fathering children, femininity upon motherhood. Women's sexuality is not included in the definition of femininity. The sexual double standard allows men sexual freedom and access to numerous women. It demands that women accept the situation and do not try to emulate the men. Montserratian women are quite aware of the patriarchal gender relations surrounding hetero-sexuality and are strongly critical of Montserratian men but they are limited in what they can do to resist such dominance.

PART 8.II Biological Reproduction

8.II.1 Contraception

We have seen in Part 8.I that biological reproduction is an important part of definitions of masculinity and femininity. It is important therefore, to investigate attitudes towards contraception in order to ascertain whether this is a way in which women attempt to circumvent patriarchal gender relations. It is also important to investigate whether there is any male control of access to or use of contraception.

The main family planning clinic in Plymouth has been in operation for about 21 years and is funded by the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Government. The original site of the clinic was on one of the main roads in the town and there were always people standing around on the street. This meant that anyone attending the clinic was on full view to the public and comments were frequently passed about a woman's sexual behaviour. This was intimidating to women, especially young girls who would be criticised for being sexually active. In 1986 the clinic moved into the grounds of the hospital and there are various ways of reaching it without being on full view. Since the move the number of people attending the clinic has increased, especially the number of teenage girls. Family planning advice is also available at the clinics in all the large villages. The main clinic is responsible for the insertion of IUD's and also for any screening programmes such as cervical cancer. A doctor works at the clinic once a week and will carry out examinations, pregnancy tests and general gynaecological medicine.

I asked the family planning nurse and the acting director of the main clinic about general attitudes towards contraception in Montserrat;

"Here in Montserrat the young boys think it's up to the girls or the young women, they don't want to know. Some of them come for the women which is good. There is a strong stigma here about contraception, there is a lot of gossip about it... It is mostly women who come to the clinic, aged 13 to 40. We have about 500 people on our records...Most women know very little and you have to spend a long time telling them everything, and they still get it wrong, especially with the pill...the most popular contraception is the pill, then the injections, the IUD's, then perhaps the condoms and in small numbers the foams. The cap isn't very popular here, it's older women who use it when they can't take the pills anymore."

"Some men use contraception, I think from their 20's onwards. Not the teenagers, they don't care, they just leave it to the women. The older ones tend to care more but really those that do protect themselves are in a class of their own, they are very few."

"The women, they are not for contraception at all in general, the Montserratians. They would like to have their 6, 7, 8

children, but if you sit with them and counsel them then they will realise the amount of children they have, if they can get something to space them out, it's better. Nowadays they are coming more responsible than once upon a time, you couldn't face the idea of contraception to them at all."

Montserratian women tend to be rather reluctant about using contraception, which is to be expected considering the importance of motherhood, and there is some sense of shame about getting contraception because it shows that you are sexually active. For younger women this can encourage social criticism which can often involve public cursing and humiliation. As women increasingly seek economic independence through employment they are attempting to restrict their fertility and to plan their families. The number of women using contraception increases each year despite the fact that its use involves the women in a deep contradiction between their own wishes and society's definition of them as women.

Table 8.II.2 shows the number of interviewed women who have used or are still using contraception and the type they use.

8.II.2 Types of contraception that have been/are used

Used contraception/ using contraception	Pills	Inject- ions	IUD	Condoms	Foam tablets	Cap	Rhythm/ withdrawal	
Yes								
No								
77	23	52	18	16	8	7	3	5

Note: Nine women used more than one type of contraception. Actual figures used.

Source: Interviews with employed women.

This group of employed women have high rates of using contraception. They got their contraceptives from the main clinic, the clinic in their village, their own doctor or directly from the pharmacist. In only two cases did the men take on the responsibility of

getting the contraceptives themselves. Men use condoms in only eight cases and this was usually under protest and because the woman was unable to use any other type. The cap was the least popular type and tends to be seen as a form used by Western white women. Two of the three women who did use it had begun to use it while in the States⁸. Although the number of women using contraception is high not all women were using it effectively, often only taking the pills on the night of sexual activity. Very few were happy about having to use it and many had had problems with using certain types, in particular the injections;

Interview 69:

"I tried the pills and they made me sick sometimes, I forgot to drink them and so I could get into trouble. And the injections, but they don't make you see your period at the time you should, so I don't like them. It was complications with them so I had to stop it. The loop is alright, my doctor fitted it."

Interview 75:

"I used the pills once in the past. I don't like it because they made me nervous. I tried the injections once, that made me bleed for about 3 months, then I had to have an operation to clean the womb. Then I went back to the pill, I got fed up with it. I decided I was going to take the loop, but it was bothering me. So I said 'forget about that I ain't using nothing!' When I had my last boyfriend, in the earlies I used the pill, I would take it about 6 months and then stop for about 5 months. I think my body have enough of it so when I feel my body change and the cycle start I go back to the doctor and take it for another 6 months."

The women tended to be worried about methods that interrupted their natural menstrual cycle and this was why the injections were not liked. What is striking though is that despite many problems women still persist in trying to do something to control their fertility although their understanding of the concept of fertility control is sometimes rather confused.

The women were all asked whether they thought contraception was important and why. Only three women did not answer the question. Most women, 93%, felt that contraception was important; only 7% did not. This

latter group objected to contraception for two reasons, either because they were Catholics or because they were not happy about taking any types of drug. The reasons for favouring contraception were because it allowed women to space their children and so they could have children when they felt ready and when they could afford them. It also allowed women to plan their future and let them choose when to get pregnant. The fact that many women do not use contraception correctly indicated to me that the above responses were another case of telling me the 'right answer', the answer they had learnt from the nurse or doctor. Only two women mentioned the fact that it would help women enjoy sex more because they would not be worried about getting pregnant. This is indicative of women's sexuality being subordinated to men's; most of the women either did not perceive sex as something to be enjoyed or they did not feel that it was something they should admit to. It also indicates that sex is equated with intercourse, which for women can mean running the risk of getting pregnant⁹. Below are some of the responses to the question; 'Do you think contraception is important?';

Interview 5:

"I think a lot of people, especially people who can't really afford it, they have these amount of children and then they suffer in the end, and I don't want that to happen to any child of mine. I have future plans as well, I want to study some more, you know, progress myself as well. I think 2 is enough."

Interview 10:

"Yes I think it's very, very important, especially for the young girls coming up, just teenage, because you know what will happen and they must protect themselves, otherwise they will find that they got 1, then 2, then 3, then 4..."

Interview 22:

"Yes it is. I think it's not nice to have a child if you are not physically, mentally, emotionally ready."

Interview 25:

"That's the only way to control birth, you can't just go around having children like bees making honey or something. I think people who don't use it only think about the present and not the future, they just think about having fun and nothing else."

Interview 59:

"Yes. Because if you are using contraceptives you are more free to enjoy sex more because you know you are not going to get pregnant. So you can relax and really enjoy it."

In Montserrat women are expected to take on the responsibility of controlling their fertility. However, due to the social censure levelled at women who are clearly sexually active, there is some reluctance to get advice and attend the public clinics. At the same time as embarrassing women about getting contraception, men expect women to be the ones to protect themselves if they do not want to get pregnant; many of the women said that their boyfriend did not like to use contraception. Very few men will do anything about contraception and those that do only use it if they are in a residential union and they too do not want to have any more children. This lack of male responsibility concerning fertility once again indicates the presence of patriarchal gender relations. If women are to have a sexual relationship they either run the risk of getting pregnant or they use methods of contraception which can be bad for their health and cause them considerable discomfort. Men, on the other hand, have sexual access to women but refuse to take a share in the responsibility. Some may in fact criticise women who do try to control their fertility, especially if they have not had a child for them (cf. note 3). The use of contraception throws up a serious contradiction for the women. They want to use it in order to control their fertility and, to some degree, their own lives, but they are also aware that to use it is to deny their femininity. This puts women in an ambiguous position and they face a dilemma. This could explain their often inadequate use of contraception and their reluctance to use it effectively until they have had at least one child.

8.II.2 Abortion

Women's access to abortion is another indicator of the nature of gender relations surrounding biological reproduction. Where there are patriarchal gender relations access to abortion is likely to be very strictly controlled and the social censure levelled against women procuring a termination, severe. This section demonstrates that while access to abortion is restrictive women are not all totally opposed to the idea of abortion and some women will resort to the use of termination in order to control their own fertility.

As in other Caribbean islands abortion is illegal on Montserrat unless the health of the mother is threatened or the child is known to be damaged. However I was told, unofficially, that there were doctors who would perform abortions privately for quite a high fee. The lawyer I interviewed stated that he had never known anyone be prosecuted for administering an abortion. There were also women in the villages who would try and induce an abortion through the use of herbal teas. It was very difficult to gather any information about abortion, but there were always people who knew someone who knew someone who had had one. It was not only the legal restriction that made people unwilling to discuss it but the fact that having children was seen as so essential to womanhood. A woman who was known to have 'thrown away her child' could expect to receive the strongest social censure from both men and women, including abusive name-calling such as 'graveyard belly'.

The employed women were all asked what they thought about abortion. (I chose not to ask any of the women directly if they had had an abortion and none of them admitted that they had). Table 8.II.3 shows a summary of their responses:

8.II.3 Responses to the question 'what do you think about abortion?'

Agree with it	Disagree with it	Only agree in certain circumstances	No answer
13 (16%)	55 (67%)	14 (17%)	18

It is clear that the majority of the women who answered the question (67%) did not agree with abortion at all. The women who only agreed with it in certain circumstances gave examples where the mother's health was at risk, teenage pregnancies or in the case of rape. The women in favour of it were not vehemently so, but felt that it was better for some women to have an abortion rather than struggle to raise a child that they could not cope with. For some of the women who disagreed with abortion it was too difficult for them to talk about, many just shook their heads or grimaced and said things like 'I hate that', 'I think it's murder'. Below are some examples of the range of opinions, first those for it, then those against;

Interview 24:

"If you have to for health reasons, if it has to do with health, then go ahead. If you are young, say 13, and you get pregnant and you really think you can't cope, and it's legalised and that sort of thing, go right ahead with it because there is no point having that child if you can't really care for it."

Interview 35:

"I think there are cases, I don't personally have anything against it but I don't feel that people should make a habit to get pregnant and do it, but I feel some people have good reason to do it and I feel if you feel like doing it I don't think there is anything wrong, if there is a good enough reason, especially if you are a young girl."

Interview 21:

"I don't think I could live with myself if I ever did that."

Interview 39:

"I am against it, one as a Catholic, but personally too. If you are sexually active you either have to be prepared to be pregnant or use contraception. It's not fair to kill off the child because you couldn't take the trouble to do something."

Interview 48:

"I don't think one should have an abortion. I have experienced many

women who before they got married had an abortion and when they would like to give their husband a child it's very difficult to get pregnant. Mostly it's because the abortions are done badly, some people do them themselves and they go wrong."

Interview 85:

"I think it's wrong, babies are a blessing from God and I don't think you should have an abortion."

Interview 26:

"I think it's wrong...well I shouldn't say it's wrong. It depends on what you want the abortion for, eh?, I personally wouldn't want one. People have them if it's a mistake, if they are going to school, sometimes because the partner is not wanting it."

Interview 30:

"Ah...That's very difficult, well, I don't believe in abortion but if it's very difficult for the person, if they are poor and can't support the child, then perhaps."

Interview 93:

"Well, I'm not for it 100% but I can understand why some people have to have an abortion, probably they went out and have sex with somebody who is not their regular boyfriend and it could cause a problem for them and maybe having an abortion is the best thing. But I think one should be careful and try and prevent it."

The interviews in the village revealed the same type of responses.

Clara felt very strongly that abortion was wrong, that it was sinful to destroy something that women can create. She said that if her daughter decided to have an abortion she would not get involved in any way and that if anything went wrong she would not give the girl any sympathy because she had brought it on herself. Celeste was also against the idea;

"I feel no matter what, whether hard times or not, a child has a right to be born. Only in the case of the mother suffering from illnesses or if the baby is ill, then in those two cases, I agree with it, but not wilfully to just go and have it done."

Alice was strongly against it but she knew of women who had had an abortion. She said that it was mostly because it was an unwanted pregnancy and so they wanted to get rid of it;

"Sometimes the men they say they are with, sometimes they don't come forward and say 'this is mine and regardless of how hard we may have it let us come through this.' They don't want it and you don't want it so the best thing to do is to get rid of it."

She also discussed the ways in which women can try to procure an abortion;

"It's very secret, you don't let your right hand know what your left is doing. Because you don't want anybody to know because it is something that you are doing wrong. It's only now that the doctors do it, but in times gone by you used to go to this back-street area and you get it done with all sort of wires and hooks and this and that and sometimes you drink tea, strong, strong tea, and sometimes it damage your insides. They never want it to be known, it's always a secret."

Violetta knew of women in the village who had had abortions;

"Some of them they see a doctor, some of them they drink a potion and so. Is just like a tea-bush they drink, and then, maybe after two weeks have gone by, is not a baby, is just blood that is expelled. I don't know how the women know about the plant, it goes right back to our ancestors and so, because the lady I used to live with told me about a certain bush that they drink. It is right outside the door there, it's called Barbados Pride and they make a tea with the leaves."

It is clear then that although it is illegal and public opinion is in the main strongly against abortion, women still have them. Many of them go to old women in the villages and may suffer medical complications as a result. In an interview with a nurse I was told;

"We get them coming into hospital now and again. Those with complications we get about 4 or 5 a year, maybe more. They may have a perforated uterus, septic infection. A long time ago you used to have a lot but we see fewer now."

A different story emerged from an ex-patriot nurse who had more gynaecological experience and who said that in the few weeks she had been working in the hospital there had been six admissions for complications due to self-induced abortions. As in the case of teenage pregnancies no formal records were kept of the number of women with complications from abortions. There seemed to be a desire to give the impression that such things do not happen on Montserrat.

Abortions obviously do happen and it could be something that the now all-male parliament should look into and perhaps consider relaxing

the laws a little so that women do not have to resort to such crude and dangerous methods. However, it does appear that the legal position on abortion reflects the attitudes of Montserratian women; most of them disagree with it. It is very difficult to separate out what the women really think from what they have been socialised to think. Women may indeed disagree with abortion publicly, not to do so, would call their femininity into question. However, women do resort to abortion and this could mean that the socialisation is not strong enough to make all women reject it. It is also another means of circumventing the patriarchal control of their biological reproduction. Yet, we must remember, that it is yet another contradiction that women are forced to confront because of the patriarchal gender relations surrounding both sexuality and biological reproduction.

8.II.3 Sexual Education And Beginning Sexual Activity

A study of teenage sexuality in Montserrat (Amelia Irvin:1983) found that 85% of teenagers were sexually active by the age of 13. She found that they have a very limited knowledge of contraception and their own biology and only 15% were using any form of birth control. She found that they were keen to find out more about contraception but were too shy to go the family planning clinic. Almost all felt that teenage pregnancy was a bad thing and that the best age for a woman to have her first child was 20 years.

It was very difficult to gain any figures about teenage and school-girl pregnancies because the schools did not keep any official figures. A girl would simply stop coming to school; there would often be no explanation as to why and there would be no follow up of that girl on

behalf of the school. They might hear later that she had had a baby. One of the secondary school principals told me;

"We never hear officially how many there are. No statistics are kept. In an average year you hear about 2 or 3 girls dropping out. We never know officially why, you may ask her class where she is and there's laughing and someone will tell you it's because she's pregnant. Parents rarely come and tell us...The girls just leave. We may ask the guidance counsellors, if we have one, to investigate, but we find the parents aren't usually very helpful and there is nothing we can do really."

Once a school-girl leaves because of her pregnancy she cannot return and so loses her education. The 1987 annual meeting of the Montserrat Family Planning Association discussed the problem of teenage pregnancies and felt that it was a growing problem which something had to be done about. When I asked the principals of the secondary schools about it they said that it was not really a major problem making it clear they did not wish to discuss it further. I asked one headteacher how many school pregnancies the school had had;

"We don't have very many. We had a first year girl last academic year who left but she didn't come back. We haven't had any this year. It's not a very common occurrence here. We had one in 1983 and then that one last year."

Later in an interview with one of the staff at the school I was told a somewhat contradictory story;

"I teach contraception in the second year but we had a girl in the first year pregnant. We seem to have more pregnancies each year, I think it is getting worse. I think they don't have an abortion because they are afraid to tell their parents and when they do it is too late."

It appears that while teenage pregnancy is acknowledged to be a problem there seems to be neither the will nor any programme to try and improve the situation¹⁰.

Interviewees said they had received very little sex education and had had to learn through listening to older children and experimentation. For many women their first menstruation came to them as a shock and most

felt frightened or ashamed. I asked Vivette how people learned about contraception;

"For one thing you don't learn it from your mother. All she tell me when I start seeing my period was to keep away from guys, she didn't even tell me I could talk to them. 'Keep away from men' that's all she tell me. It began one afternoon after school. I was shocked. I feel a sharp pain here and I was shame to go and tell her, so shame I had to go and tell her that I see blood coming out of my pants! All she say was 'It's not blood, you're a big woman now.'...What really hurt me was when she go and tell my father, right in front of me she tell him, I was so embarrassed I just keep my head down. He didn't say nothing, he didn't tell me to keep away from men. My mother told me nothing about contraception, she just gave me something to put on."

Alice had a similar experience in not knowing what was happening when she saw her first period. She said that she had learnt the little she now knew from her friends, especially those who had older brothers and sisters;

"Children now they learn from one another. When they live in the 2 room houses they see what is going on there and they go out and try to experiment with other children."

Mayetta found the whole thing quite amusing and said that even children in the nursery are very curious about each other. I asked her when she felt that children became sexually active;

"About from 12 upwards, once the girls have started to develop, even before 12 now but that doesn't mean that they are doing the real thing but after seeing the different pictures on TV or even hearing the sounds in the house and what not, they try a thing. If they live with their mother and the boyfriend comes and goes and they wonder what that man is coming for, they are curious even small children. They want to know what is going on, so they steal chances, they peep and so, they listen to sounds. Then they try it out. When they do it properly is about from 12 upwards."

Samuel and Jacob both said that they had learned their sexual knowledge through experimentation with girls when they were very young and also through listening to what the older men said. The equivalent source of information is not available to girls as women rarely discussed sex with other women and if they did they would be very careful not to

say anything in front of children. Samuel said;

"Well I learned the hard way. I learned by going out to have sex. You see my mother and father was, I would say, a bit backwards in their education so they didn't have much to say about that. We were young and I interfered, that's how I got along, I got my knowledge from that...There was a girl who was a little older than me and we used to walk home from school together. So the girl asked me if I would like a little 'doobey', that's what we call it then, right. I was about 6 and I didn't know what to do and she showed me. So from there I learned a little sense and we did it every afternoon! So there's where I started."

There seems to be a general agreement with the findings of the Irvin study that children become sexually active in some way about the age of 12 or 13. Most of those interviewed had no direct education about sex and contraception from either their parents, those bringing them up or from school apart from biology lessons. As Vivette said;

"In school they teach you about sperm and the egg and stuff like that. They tell you how to get pregnant but they don't tell you how to stop getting pregnant!"

In general because of the structure of sexual behaviour there are more public spaces available to men and their boasting about sexual exploits is encouraged. This allows boys to learn more about sexual activity than girls. For many girls their first awareness of their sexual development is through menstruation, which usually frightens them or makes them feel ashamed. Girls run the risk of getting pregnant and so, for them, sexual experimentation is not the enjoyable game that it is for boys. If a girl becomes pregnant while still at school she has to leave and so misses out on her education. As yet there is no opportunity for her to catch up on what she has missed. In cases where a school-boy got her pregnant he will not even be identified and he certainly does not lose out on his education. Girls quickly learn that sexual mistakes can damage their future opportunities while not affecting those of boys at all.

8.II.4 Part II Conclusion

This part has shown us the general attitudes of women towards contraception and abortion. The lack of understanding about their own biology at menstruation continues through their adult life. While many more women are now using contraception many are using it ineffectively, demonstrating a failure to understand basic principles about fertility. At the same time, women have clear arguments about why they think contraception is important and despite various difficulties they still continue to use it. Probably the biggest difficulty faced by the women is the dilemma they face because they wish to control their fertility but this means denying their femininity. It is a contradiction most women appear not to have resolved. Abortion is seen as the antithesis to femininity and should be avoided. If women do have abortions it is in extreme secrecy and probably causes considerable guilt. Women do have abortions and as they have them illegally there are frequent medical complications associated with it. Children seem to begin their sexual activity at a fairly young age, and most seem keen to experiment, especially boys. Girls are often frightened or confused about their sexual development and even feel ashamed. They are not exposed to as much sexual education as the boys. If a girl becomes pregnant at school she tends simply to stop attending one day and there is no follow-up from the school or education department. Such girls have forfeited their education as they are not allowed to return.

PART 8.III Children

8.III.1 Attitudes Towards Children

As we have seen, children play an important role in self-identity and social status of both men and women. Men's and women's attitudes towards children will give further insight into the gender relations surrounding biological reproduction. First let us consider how many of the employed women interviewed have children and how many they have.

We can see from table 8.III.4 that 70% of the women have at least one child. The mean number of children is two with 39% of women having that number; 36% of women have just one child. Contrary to the pattern followed by their own mothers, these employed women are limiting their fertility. However, among unemployed women living in the villages the rates might be higher.

Table 8.III.4 Who has children and how many

Do you have children?		Number of children alive						Died young
Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5	6	
70	30	25	27	10	4	2	1	1

Of the 30 women who did not have children yet, only three said that they had decided not to have them or did not want to have them. Women not only feel that they should have children but go ahead and have them whether they have a steady relationship or not. However, they do seem to restrict the number of children to a number they feel they can cope with.

Only 21 of the women said that they had planned when to have their children. Most of these were married women. Seven women had planned one

or two children but had had one by accident. Often the women did not find out about contraception until after their first pregnancy. For 41% of the women, their children were unplanned. When asked how they felt about it when they knew they were pregnant there were a mixture of responses. Some women had been happy but most had been upset, frightened, annoyed with themselves and regretful, especially when it meant that they had to leave school or college. This was a surprising response in view of what we know about femininity and the importance of children in establishing oneself as a 'real' woman. However, most of the women felt like this about their first child which they had when they were still teenagers, many of them still at school. Also many of the women did not understand what was happening to their bodies; often they were told they were pregnant by the older man they were having sex with. They were accused of trying to 'become big women before their time'. They were not seen as responsible enough to raise a child, and their early pregnancy and thence sexual activity brought shame upon their families, their mothers in particular. For many their biggest upset was indeed because they had upset their own mothers;

Interview 16:

"My son was unplanned. My mother went hysterical. I kept quiet and she calmed down. She said I was too young at 16."

Interview 35:

"It was unplanned. I felt awful when I found out. My mother was quite upset, she was very upset and she cried a lot, a lot, a lot, but she was very, very supportive. She was cross sometimes but most of the time she tell me 'you have to accept it', She really encouraged me a lot and tried not to let it happen again."

The women were generally happy with the way things had turned out with their children and appeared to have no regrets. The only women who did regret having their children so young were those who had had to leave school early; they regretted missing out on their education. I found no

strong preference for either boys or girls, with most women wanting to have one of each.

8.III.1.1 Children and life changes

The women were about equally mixed in their responses to the question, 'Has having children changed your life?' Some felt that it had, others thought not. Some women felt that they could have done more educationally if they had not had children;

Interview 6:

"It has changed my life. I would have gone on to get my masters and Ph.D but because of him I haven't got it, but I don't blame it on him, neither do I hold it up, I think he's worth more than all of that."

Interview 15:

"Yes in a sense of goals that I had in my mind, it was quite difficult to reach them because I had to leave secondary school and I was doing well. I may have gone to college or university if I hadn't had him."

Other women put emphasis on the fact that they had to become more responsible and lost a degree of freedom;

Interview 16:

"Yes it changes things. Then when you are young and making children the things that you would normally do without having kids you can't do. You have to think on life more serious."

Interview 50:

"You have to be worrying, you have to look about them to see that they go through, bring them up the right way, and you have more talking to do. When they are small you don't have so much of talking to do but now they are big you have more responsibility."

Interview 66:

"I was still young then and suddenly I wasn't as free as before, I always had to be there."

Some women felt that having children held them back in some way and that they couldn't take advantage of opportunities in the way they used to;

Interview 24:

"There are lots of things I used to miss out on like going out because you couldn't get babysitters. Odd little things like

travelling, because before I had kids I could go, now it's more expensive because you have children to take."

Interview 59:

"Well children stop you taking certain opportunities. You cannot always do what you want to do. When you want to go out you you can't always go. But when I had my daughter I went away to work in St. Thomas to work. I stayed with an aunt and my mother took care of the baby, I wanted to stay longer and go on to the big country, the States, but I had to come back for my baby. If you don't have any children you just live carefree, you don't have the same responsibilities, you don't have to save for anyone but yourself. With children you have to save for their education and medical care. You can't only think of yourself."

A minority of women felt that having children had not changed their lives at all;

Interview 33:

"Not one bit, I haven't changed at all. You see I have a nephew and he's about 3 years older and I used to have that nephew as my own, I used to support him, give him everything. So he was like my son, so when my son came it wasn't anything unusual. I have still have the same lifestyle with my mother."

Although most of the women did feel that having children had changed their life, had lost some of their freedom and had had to forego a lifestyle they were used to, none of the women spoke with any sense of regret. They were all eager to stress that although they had had to effect changes in their lives, it had been worth it to have the children. Interviewee 64 argued very strongly that it was not having children that had placed restrictions on her life but rather sharing her life with a man;

"My childhood changed because I had to concentrate on my children as a mother. They kept me down a little because my mind didn't really have plans for what I want but now I've grown up, we can sit and speak of whatever we want in our life. I'm happy, I'm very happy with them. I try to show you, having them now is not keeping me down. Okay, I go away, I find myself going away a lot, in the last three years I have been away 12 times, to Antigua and Guadeloupe. They don't keep me back. What I think is more keeping down to me, is to live with a man. That is much more keeping back for me than my two kids. My two kids, they are big and I can leave them with their grandparents or some family and I go. It's not a problem. But with a man living with me, he will always say, 'no you cannot go,' he will never know what you are going for and of course it will jump into their minds that you are going to see

another man, when that's not it. My kids will never tell me that. Whenever I go away I go to develop both them and me, so they are not keeping down for me."

8.III.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of children

All the women who had children were asked what they thought were the advantages, the good things, and what were the disadvantages, the bad things, about having children. In discussing the disadvantages there were the usual complaints such as the amount of attention they need, the amount of time they take up and the problems when they were young with feeding, changing and washing. Two other major problems that were cited were: the worries about having enough money to look after them properly and the difficulties of raising children alone, especially without the help of the father:

Interview 10:

"Well the problem is having the one behind the other, to have them too fast is not good for you, and second, if you don't treat a child in the proper way you are going to have problems, you will get problems later on. Some parents cannot afford to look after their children and many times the children end up with malnutrition or the boys become delinquent, they steal. If you don't plan your children you can have a lot of problems."

Interview 58:

"The father is the bad thing. Some of them after you have the child they don't want to see you anymore, or they don't help."

Interview 93:

"Well one of the problems is if the father doesn't be with you, and if you are not working then you have to be thinking about where you are going to get money from to care for that child and maybe you have to find another man. Then that man will want to come in and advantage that child and want to make another for him."

While some women did have complaints about having children these were always balanced with their comments on the good things and there were never any indications of regret. Many of the women said that they could think of no difficulties in having children and that they personally had not had any problems. What does emerge, though, is a feeling

that children per se are not a problem but that their fathers are. Fathers can be a problem because they do not stay with the woman and help with the raising of the child; or because it is they who place restrictions on what the women can do rather than the children. If she is deserted by one man a woman may be forced to find another partner for support who will then only agree to support someone else's child if the woman 'makes a child for them'. In these situations it is the patriarchal gender relations between the mother and the children's father that cause the problems rather than the children themselves.

The large majority of women had no difficulty in thinking about a response to the question, 'What are the advantages of having children?' What was interesting about their responses was that they imbued children with the qualities Western society would more commonly associate with a partner. What the women seek from a relationship with a man, but fail to find because of the patriarchal nature of the gender relations surrounding sexual unions, is found in the relationships they develop with their children. In Montserrat I found evidence to support the view that the mother-child relationship was the strongest and most enduring. They talked of: companionship; having someone to give affection to; someone to receive affection from; someone to make you feel better when you feel depressed; someone to comfort you; having someone there. There were also the benefits of having someone to help around the house, to run errands and maybe someone to help you when you became old. The women also valued the things that having children taught them: responsibility; learning to care for someone else; and learning more about yourself. Children are seen as a source of pride, especially when they begin to do well at school or grow up to be a credit to their family and the community¹¹. The responses below demonstrate the positive attitude women

have towards children;

Interview 5:

"I don't know, there is something unexplained about it all, you know, when you look at her you really wonder how it happens, the wonder of it all, the joy you get from seeing them grow."

Interview 29:

"You know sometimes the children make you so happy. Like just last night the little one was hugging me up all night, she kept saying, 'Mummy, I love you Mummy, I love you,' I don't know why. They make you happy and are companionship for you, because sometimes your husband has to go away or out some place and the kids are there."

Interview 33:

"You see the good thing of children is that you have somebody to share things with. There are times that you feel you don't have to do this because you are on your own, with kids you have to think twice about your responsibilities and you have to do it. It's a good feeling to know that you have somebody to call you 'Mummy', to call your own, somebody that you can share things with. Sometimes you might feel depressed but then you play with your son and it's comforting, it helps."

Interview 51:

"It's like having a friend, just little company, I really enjoy playing with her, it's just fun having her around and watching her."

Interview 77:

"Well you always have company when nobody else is there. Just to be proud that you have children."

Interview 85:

"Children are such fun, she's good company, she makes me feel happy, takes away my pain, I love watching her grow up."

Interview 98:

"The good thing about children eh? There are so many good things about them eh? I think to have your own and to really feel proud, especially when they reach a stage when they can talk to you and relate to you, you know. It's just fantastic to have children."

The people interviewed in the village had similar ideas about the advantages and disadvantages of having children.

In Montserrat children are highly valued and are generally well cared for and protected. They are not only seen as source of social esteem and social respect for their mothers but they also are a great source of joy and happiness. The patriarchal gender relations present

between most men and women in their sexual unions mean that women turn to children for the qualities of a loving and caring relationship that they fail to get from their male partners.

Interview 70:

"Well sometimes you are at home and you and your boyfriend are vexed and so but you have the children there to talk to, someone who needs you so it takes your mind off the problems. They make you happy."

Men too may feel that they do not get the kind of loving relationship they want from women and this could explain the strong bonds they maintain throughout their adult life with their own mothers or the women who raised them, which has been discussed in 8.I.4. It could also explain the importance of male friendships (Wilson:1971, 1973). We have seen that women value being mothers and men value being fathers. Let us now consider whether biological parenthood is translated into practical parenthood through caring for the children.

8.III.2 Responsibilities of Childcare

The problems employed women face in trying to find adequate childcare while they are at work have been discussed in Chapter VI. This section will consider the gender relations that emerge through childcare responsibilities and investigate who cares for Montserratian children.

8.III.2.1 Organising childcare

Montserrat has relatively good provision of state childcare. The Government runs two day-care centres for the under three's and 10 nurseries for the under five's. All children can attend nursery school. There are two private nurseries which are used by women in the top professions.

Many women in employment only took their paid maternity leave of two or three months and returned to work when the child was a few months old. There is no state provision for any children under the age of one year; after that there are not enough places for all those mothers demanding them. Therefore, women have to use other sources of childcare if they are to return to work. For the majority of women early childcare is provided by their own mothers, female relatives or neighbours, and for some of the better-paid women, paid nannies. Such care is usually provided until the child is three years old when they go to nursery but even then the children have to have someone to come home to as the nurseries finish at 3pm whereas most women work until 4pm. If the children go to nursery in Plymouth then some join their mothers at their place of work and wait until their mother has finished. This was especially true of the two banks, the Stamp Office and the Treasury. While conducting interviews three women working in the above places were joined by their children. The children were usually given some paper to draw on and would play in a quiet space in the building until their mothers had finished their duties. The fact that the managers allowed this is another indication of positive attitudes towards children.

Most employed women travel home from work by the mini-buses that run between town and the various villages. The women tend to catch the bus driven by the same driver each morning and evening and so they are able to establish a routine that allows them to drop off and collect their children from whoever is caring for them during the day. One evening I caught a bus back to the village where I was living with two women friends who worked in the Post Office. We caught the bus that they always caught, Wendel's bus. One of the women, Camella, left her nine month old daughter with a cousin who lived in Stauley, one of the

villages we passed on the route home. In the evening the bus would drive off the main road and right up to the yard of the cousin's house and wait while Camella went in to pick up the baby. No-one on the bus minded the delay and they would all coo and greet the baby, who clearly recognised most people. Camella and Wendel had been partners at one time and had two sons together but the daughter was not his child. However, he was still willing to help Camella in the same way he helped other passengers. Later, passing through another village, Wendel would drive across the road against a drive and pip his horn. A three year old boy would then run out to the bus, be picked up and passed to his mother who always sat in the front seat. This flexibility of bus and taxi drivers and the indulgence of the other passengers allowed women to transport their children safely and cheaply between their own home and those of the carers.

I found only one woman who said that she had felt guilty about going back to work when her children were young. She said that she would have given anything not to have had to go back. Interestingly, she was born and brought up in England and had transferred the idea that a woman should be with her young child at all times, out to Montserrat. Although she had been able to find a very good nanny and now had two teenage children with whom she had a very good relationship she still felt guilty about what she had done. None of the Montserratian women expressed such guilt. On the contrary, they felt that their going out to work not only benefited the family but also themselves and they did not feel guilty about that. They also felt that children benefited from having stable relationships with other adults. Below are some examples of what the women organised or still organise for the care of their children;

Interview 9:

"My mother took care of him so I didn't have any problems, my

mother was always there for me. He was 2½ when he went to nursery which helped."

Interview 16:

"My mother was here then for the older ones and now with the youngest it's her grandmother. Sometimes she comes by me in the office after she has finished at the nursery, it's not a problem here at work."

Interview 20:

"My mother and neighbours help. Now where I live the last one's nanny is a neighbour, she takes good care of her. She has grown children herself, she's a mother so she knows how to look after children."

Interview 59:

"Before the children could go to nursery at 3 my aunt looked after them while I was at work. Now they are old enough they go to nursery."

Interview 84:

"When I was working the father or their grandmother looked for them and they went to nursery when they were 3."

Interview 98:

"I paid someone to look for them, then I took them to the day-care centre and then from there to the nursery. Now they are at school."

While these women give the impression that adequate childcare is not hard to organise, it is important to realise that for many women childcare can be a constant worry. This can be because baby-sitters are unreliable, because the usual carer falls ill, because the child falls ill or because the carer proves unsuitable. As more women go into paid employment so there will be fewer grandmothers in the future available to care for the children of younger working mothers. Interviewee 20 stated the main problems women have;

"My mother took care of her, then when she was 3 she went to pre-school. I think we should have nurseries that take care of the children from the time your maternity leave is up. That's the problem in Montserrat, getting someone to care for the kids before they reach nursery age. They have day-care centres but they cater for unmarried women, but married women need a place to take their kids before they reach pre-school age. That is the biggest problem we have. You see my mother had to get a neighbour to look after the baby sometimes because some days she had to go out to work."

What also emerged very strongly from the interviews with employed women was that they had to organise childcare for the children themselves. They got very little or no help from the fathers of the children. In some cases paternal relatives would take care of the children, but it was again women who were doing the caring. Caring, 'looking for', a child is very much seen as the woman's responsibility, even between married couples. It is wives who have to organise childcare and cope with any difficulties that arise. It is they who have to take time off work if the baby-sitter cannot come, not their husbands, regardless of who earns more money.

8.III.2.2 Care from the fathers

When asked directly about support from the father about half of the women said that the father either gave financial support for the child or was living with the children and so supported them in that way. However, half the women said that they received no support from the fathers at all. In some cases the fathers would still see the children but offer no financial assistance. In other cases money would be sent, rather erratically, but the children would never see their father. In Montserratian Family Law there is provision for cases where men can be proved to be the father but have refused to give any financial support for the child. This is the so-called 'Bastardy Law'. A woman can sue a putative father through the courts and if he is proved to be the father the courts can order him to pay a fixed sum of money to the child through the mother. The fixed sum is \$12 a week. The amount is ridiculously low and many women see it as an insult rather than a help. This partly explains why very few women have gone to court to get fathers to pay support. Not only is the amount they gain a pitiful one but it is often

hard to prove that the putative father is the father as they are not legally required to give blood samples as evidence. The evidence rests on the woman being able to present witnesses who will testify that she and the putative father were engaged in a sexual relationship at the time of the conception of the child. The appearance of the case in court can be quite traumatic for women as the putative father may deny paternity and accuse her of sexual infidelity or promiscuity. Women who do go to court are often criticised for 'dragging the name of the child through the mud'. As the potential rewards are so low many women would rather hope for the odd payment from the father than take him to court. This is yet again an example where the legal system, legislated for by male-dominated parliaments and practised by an all-male profession, fails to reflect the social reality and benefit those it was established to try and help¹².

While many men feel that adequate paternal care can be given through cash payments, others refuse to provide anything although they may accept that they are the father, and still others will even refuse to accept that the child is theirs at all. Men have a great fear of being expected to support a child or acknowledge a child that is not theirs. Such a situation would open them up to ridicule from other men. Samuel had got a girl pregnant when he was younger. She was only 17 and her family did not know he was the father. Instead they blamed her regular boyfriend:

"Well the girl was afraid, she was frightened and upset. I don't believe her family know it was me, I was just like a thief in the night, I just went in there one night...That child was not given to me, she gave it to the boyfriend, but I know that it was mine. I didn't feel no way about that because that was the way she wanted it. I'm not a man to go run behind a woman to ask for a baby! I wouldn't tell him the truth either because that's none of my business. If he want to take the child he could go ahead, but I know it's mine!"

In cases where they wish to remain with a woman who already has a child, they can only be saved from ridicule if she has another child for him. Samuel again;

"I would always want my girlfriend to have a child with me, at least one, especially if she have one already."

To avoid being duped into accepting a child that is not theirs some men refuse to acknowledge the child until after it is born and they can decide whether it resembles them in any way.

Women argue that if men deny that a child is theirs they are simply trying to avoid their responsibilities because they argue that the women are almost always right about who the father of their child is. In the discussion about men having more than one sexual partner women accepted that some women have more than one man but that it was not very common and only happened when the woman was certain that she would not get pregnant. A woman fears getting pregnant and not knowing who the father is. If it happens the woman will almost certainly try to get an abortion.

Celeste;

"I know two women who have had abortions. One of them, she wasn't sure who she was pregnant for and so she had to get rid of it."

In the villages women tend to be the custodians of information about families and relatedness between people. It is important that children know who their fathers are and who their brothers and sisters are on their father's side if incest is to be avoided. This means that women try to be very sure about who they become pregnant for;

Vivette:

"Women know that it was this guy that make the child. Sometimes the woman might be going out with different guys but she is only having sex with one of them...A woman, right, she will only sleep with a man she really cares about."

In most cases parenting is left to the mother. However, there are some men who now accept their responsibilities more, and who do not have the desire to have many children with many different women. Having numerous sexual partners gives them the same peer respect that the fathering of many children does. As women learn to control their fertility having many sexual partners will become an increasingly important way to establish masculinity.

8.III.3 Part III Conclusion

The fact that women are forced, in many cases, to take care of the children reinforces the image of the woman as mother and carer and the father as a free agent with no responsibilities. This is another aspect of the patriarchal gender relations which surround biological reproduction. Men maintain the freedom they gain in sexual relations because they can easily refuse, and are very rarely forced, to accept responsibility for their children. Women on the other hand are not free agents in sexual relationships because they have to be wary about pregnancy and run the risk of being burdened with the single-handed raising of a child. Caring for and having children demonstrates the link between sexuality and biological reproduction. The patriarchal nature of the gender relations surrounding sexuality is further compounded by the patriarchal gender relations surrounding having and raising children. While all the women said that they enjoyed their children and valued them this does not mean that they are not disadvantaged vis a vis men.

PART 8.IV Social Control

This section attempts to investigate the means by which the patriarchal gender relations of sexuality and biological reproduction are maintained and reproduced. Social censure and violence are difficult areas to investigate for various reasons; often violence relating to gender is private and rarely an area of discussion; social censure will vary between cultures and so may be missed by someone from another culture; because of the cultural specificity of social censure something that may appear to be fairly innocuous to someone from one culture may be very hurtful to someone from another, this is especially true of abusive language. Partly because of these problems it has been an area that has received little attention. However, it is an important area if the mechanisms for reproducing and maintaining patriarchal gender relations are to be found.

8.IV.1 Social Censure and Control

Social censure and control takes various forms in Montserrat and ranges from the quiet word between older members of the village and younger men and women about their relationship, to violent attacks on women who do not obey their partners or who do not conform to the accepted behaviour norms.

In Chapter VII Ruth's explanation for getting married was quoted. Her husband had not really thought about marrying her until the sexton of the church had had a quiet word with him about their relationship. Interviewee 24 was also quoted as saying that in the past older people would talk to younger couples about their relationship, and try and

encourage them to marry rather than live together. Some of the employed women said that they were happy with the nature of their relationship but had decided to marry either because of their mother's feelings about cohabitation or because they would not stay overnight with their boyfriend because of upsetting their parents. Not offending older relatives is something that most young Montserratians strive towards but others just do as they wish and become 'wayward'. It is always women's behaviour which is more constricted and controlled than men's, and women will bear the brunt of social criticism and condemnation if they disobey these controls. Men, on the other hand, are indulged more and while they may earn some criticism for extreme behaviour, the controls are not so tight. For example, none of the women said that they had decided to marry because their husband's family had been upset. The women who visited boyfriends had to return before dawn because their parents would be upset, not their boyfriend's.

The public arena is the place for social criticism. The street is often the sight of confrontations between men and women and the language used is frequently explicit and designed to bring as much humiliation as possible upon the protagonists. There are more insulting terms to use against women in Montserratian dialect and unless a woman is particularly sharp tongued she will lose face the most; that is she will be deemed not to have defended herself very well. 'Cursing' is sometimes called a Caribbean national sport and clever use of language is seen as a great skill. A 'cursing' couple arguing in the street will be a source of entertainment and a group will often gather round the pair. Some of the incidents in the police report book were ones where men had publicly insulted women in the street. The men are usually warned but they rarely stop it¹³.

In Montserratian society men are expected to boast about their sexual exploits whereas women want to keep them secret (cf.note 4). Men are given the public space of the rum shop in which to discuss their sexual activity. Women have no such public space apart from the church where strict moral standards of behaviour are to be maintained. Vivette discussed the different reactions between men and women just after they have begun a sexual relationship:

"When you love one guy, then you going to have sex with him. But men don't care like women, they just want to brag about you the next day. They call out to the girls in town. Sometimes they might be calling to that girl and she won't speak to them or call to them, because she wants it a secret, and they get upset and so they shout, 'oh,I fuck you last night but now you won't talk with me!', they feel hurt and so they curse her."

It is very difficult for a woman to be seen talking to a man and for people not to think that there is some kind of relationship between them. Young, unrelated men and women do not communicate with each other generally unless they are initiating a sexual relationship¹⁴. If a boyfriend or husband saw a woman talking to another man, or was told about it by other villagers, he would certainly ask her about the incident or he may even beat her. Ruth gave the following example;

"Somebody might just see you talking to the boy and then someone meet your boyfriend and they say "You know what happen? I meet Tracey and she talking to the boy". When you come home probably he don't even ask you, but he just get full up and swell up and as you say any little thing, that start the noise and from then you get blows, and you don't even know the cause of it!"

If older women see their daughters or younger relatives talking with 'unsuitable' men they will quickly interfere and break up the conversation and lecture the man and probably hit the girl, depending on how closely they are related. Girls are much more restricted in their social activities than boys and are not allowed to attend as many events, especially at night, and are always called in from playing before

their brothers are. Interviewee 35 remembered this about her childhood;

"I remember when I was young I used to go out and play a lot. After I reach a certain age, in the evenings I would be called into the house, but the boys stayed out. But you, the girl, are told to go in. The boys are set free...the girls are restricted in the home."

Gossip is seen as a major problem in Montserrat because nothing is secret from anyone, and everyone is seen to interfere in everyone else's business. Some of the women I interviewed saw gossip in a very negative light;

Interview 15:

"People are always ready to tell you something. People who gossip so, their tongue should be clipped. It messes up people's lives. Plenty people go around telling you something that is not true because they don't like that person. You see people just gossip too much and people are funny. I have a very good man friend, not a boyfriend or nothing, but a good friend. People always saying we are in something, but we are not, they are so childish. You have to be very careful about who you talk to on Montserrat. Someone may be your best friend and then you see she take your boyfriend away from you. People aren't nice, women are as bad about gossip."

Throughout this chapter what is socially acceptable behaviour for women has emerged. They should be loyal to one man; they should either have a visiting relationship or be married, but not cohabit. If they discover their partner is not loyal to them they are respected more if they keep quiet about the whole affair rather than make a fuss. If they have to argue with anyone then it should be the other woman but never the man himself. A woman is not supposed to ask a man about his activities or where he has been. A woman who persists with such questions may be beaten. A woman should be a mother, and if she cannot have her own children then she should at least adopt a child. A woman who does not comply with such behaviour may be gossiped about, cursed in the street and generally socially criticised by both men and women. The ultimate sanction of violence may be meted out by her partner.

On the other hand, men are expected to boast about their sexual

prowess and those that do not may be ridiculed as homosexuals. A father is expected to acknowledge his child and to support it and will be criticised if he fails to do so. However if he still refuses there is no other form of social control meted out to him. If a mother does take him to court to get some kind of support then public opinion often sides with the father because people tend to think that women should not take a child's name into court.

8.IV.2 Violence Relating to Gender

As is true in all societies it was very difficult to gather any data about violence between men and women who were sexually involved with each other (Dobash & Dobash:1980, Hammer:1978, Kamugisha:1986). Montserrat prides itself on its good record of little violence in the public sphere and it is a very safe place to live, work and walk as a single woman. However, for women involved with a man, the story can be very different, although such incidents are rarely reported.

I was able to do a small study of a sample over three months of police reports held in the police station of the study village. In the chosen months of March, May and July, 1987, there were 15 incidents which involved men and women; five were reports of the use of threatening language; two of indecent language; two cases of annoyance; four cases of assault and two cases of battery. In only one instance was the case to go to court; in the other 14, warnings were given to the offending men. In almost all cases the men and women were in a residential union together, in a visiting union or neighbours. In one case a woman was assaulted by her son (cf. note 13). The fact that so many cases were dealt with by just issuing a warning does not mean that the police do not see these

cases as serious. Rather it is because many of the women want the men warned and told to stop interfering with them but they do not wish to take the matter any further.

It was very difficult to get women to discuss the issue of violence, even when I knew that they had violent partners. While some women would not discuss it in an interview they would talk to me about it. For some women my house became a place of safety where the women could wait with their children and from where they could call the police or another person to intervene in the situation, usually a minister¹⁵. I asked women if they felt that violence in the home happened a lot in Montserrat. Ruth felt that relationships between men and women used to be better;

"When we were younger men and women relationship used to be sweeter, people used to love better. Sometimes you used to hear about beating and those things but not much. But now they see you talking to some man without any meaning in it, tonight when they come they just beat you up and all that kind of foolishness. In my time you could go this place and that place and it wasn't a problem. Now there is the jealousy that is bad."

Mayetta:

"I don't know if it happen so much in this village but in Montserrat they do it, men beat women, usually because they see her with another man, because they don't behave as they should."

Violetta:

"Is not very common but those that do it they really do it often. Some men don't know how to control their temper while others do...I don't think it is fair for men to hit women, he's some kind of coward. I don't think a man who would hit a woman sees himself as a real man. But some men claim that hitting the woman means that he loves her, I can't believe that."

Interview 24:

"Not a lot but enough. I find it disgusting. When I used to live at home by my mother there was a couple next door and, oh my goodness, it was awful, he was beating up this girl every night. They are not married or anything, she didn't have to hang on in there because she has a family who is telling her to come back home, come home and she still hang on. That's one of the instances where I say women let men get away with it, you don't have to put up with it. Sometimes he was drunk. I think it was chronic in him, he wouldn't stop."

While few women would discuss violence those that did were very angry about it and felt that men should be able to control their temper. They were very contemptuous of men who beat their women. Vivette said that if she ever saw a man hitting a woman in public she would always try to intervene and stop him. All too often, though, the violence happens in the home and while neighbours can hear the arguments few will actually intervene and go into the house although they may call the police. Few cases are ever reported and even fewer reach the law courts.

The most difficult experience I had while conducting interviews in the village was when I asked Jacob about violence towards women and he went on to tell me that he had done it himself and felt perfectly justified:

"Yes men hit women. It happens because of something that is wrong, the woman might just take a chance with a different guy or it come from different behaviour, like when the man feel embarrassed in certain ways so he just do slap her or something. It's kinda like a training, if you have a child and you lash that child to give it a training then that might just work for the woman. Because you know women just be like a child sometimes, so you just lash her to make her co-operate more. Some of them love it, right, some of them love it, because they say that if the man doesn't beat them it means he doesn't love them. I had to do it myself. She had played a trick on me. The trick was that I told she not to go out and she decide to go out when I turn my back. When I come home I find that she gone, she had gone to see another man, so it was because of that I hit her. It was an argument first but after she bawl and went out. Then I plan for when she come back to beat she. I hit her hard with my fists. It's not like fighting with a man, when you hit a man you want to win, but with a woman you still have love within you but you want to give she blow or something. Afterwards I did feel two ways, I feel proud and I feel sorry afterwards, because you see I still have to watch she. But we get over it and keep the relationship going. It don't make no sense to hurt her because what she can't do if she injured you have to do it all."

This lengthy and open description of what he did shows that some men believe that disciplining a woman who they feel has done wrong is quite acceptable and that women usually deserve the treatment they get.

Viewing women as children that need to be taught a lesson indicates the inferior status men designate to women.

8.IV.3 Part IV Conclusion

Social censure and control is therefore directed much more at women than men and it is used as a means of controlling women's behaviour. There is acceptable heterosexual behaviour and anyone stepping beyond the boundaries can expect the most severe social reaction. It is fear of social censure that: makes women reluctant to go to the family planning clinic for advice; makes them desire to keep their sexual relations private; makes them try to keep an abortion as secret as possible; makes them remain loyal to a man who may have many other girlfriends; makes them confront the other women rather than the adulterous male; and makes them struggle to raise a child alone rather than go to court. The gender relations involved in social censure and control are patriarchal and once again men benefit at the expense of women.

In men's eyes there is an acceptable form of behaviour for women and those that stray away from that or disobey orders can expect to be punished. For women who refuse to accept such a subordinate position violence may be used against them as a form of control. Montserratian women have a very difficult battle to try and change such attitudes¹⁶. Once again opting for a visiting union rather than a residential union may be a way of women trying to minimise their risk of being beaten as most violence did appear to occur between men and women who were living together. Domestic violence is the epitome of patriarchal gender relations and more women on Montserrat experience such patriarchy than we could ever know about.

8.V General Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the nature of sexuality and biological reproduction on Montserrat. Part I investigated the nature of gender relations surrounding sexuality and showed the following: sexuality is defined in heterosexual terms with men's sexuality defining that of women; masculinity is defined through heterosexuality and the production of children; femininity is defined through the production and rearing of children; the sexual double standard is defined strongly in favour of men; women have a negative perception about men; and men do not really trust or form close relationships with women who are prospective sexual partners. The gender relations of sexuality are therefore patriarchal.

Part II considered biological reproduction through investigating contraception, abortion and sexual education. It showed that: women used contraception but there was some reluctance to do so and men would have nothing to do with it; abortion was disliked strongly and no women admitted that they had had one; sexual education was almost non-existent and girls would suffer if they became pregnant while still a teenager. The gender relations of biological reproduction were also shown to be patriarchal.

Part III investigated the having and raising of children which demonstrates the linkages between sexuality and reproduction. It showed that: women are expected to care for children; fathers often do not accept responsibility; women find the affection and companionship that they say is lacking from their relationships with men, through the relationships they form with their children; children are highly valued and bring a lot of joy to the women; children are the means by which

women can show that they are 'full' and 'good' women and yet because they have to accept sole responsibility for them, children are also a burden. The gender relations which surround the having and raising of children are patriarchal.

Part IV showed the ways in which the patriarchal gender relations of sexuality and biological reproduction are maintained and reproduced through social censure and the use of violence by individual men against individual women. Women's behaviour is therefore restrained within the boundaries set by the patriarchal gender relations. For women who step outside the boundaries of acceptable behaviour the punishment can be severe. Hence the patriarchal gender relations are very hard to escape.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly draw together the conclusions reached in each chapter. It will then present the major conclusions of the thesis relating to the nature of gender relations in Montserrat. The final section will present what Montserratian women themselves said about the nature of gender relations.

9.2 Chapter Conclusions

Chapter II discussed feminist theory and presented criticisms of certain approaches to the study of women's subordination. The chapter came to two major conclusions. It argued that rather than concentrating on which type of feminist theory said what, it was more constructive to concentrate on the concepts feminist theory had developed. Various concepts were considered: production and reproduction; gender roles and relations; capitalism; and patriarchy. The chapter argued that the most useful concept was that of gender relations, the power relations between men and women. From there the chapter concluded that it was the nature of patriarchal gender relations that was to be the main area of investigation. Once the concept to be investigated had been decided upon the chapter then presented explanations as to why four particular areas of social organisation were to be used in an investigation of patriarchal gender relations. These four areas were identified as the household, the workplace, union patterns and heterosexual behaviour.

Chapter III reviewed the Caribbean literature concerning those four areas of social organisation and discussed the nature of gender relations within them. The chapter identified many conflicts within the literature,

with some studies presenting findings in stark contrast to those that had gone before. Studies done in the 1970s and 1980s contradicted the findings of the 1950s and 1960s. This was not solely because the nature of these social areas had changed, but because later researchers have tried to avoid imposing their own ideas about what ought to be the case and spend more time on allowing the people under study to tell their own stories. Later researchers have also concentrated more on the lives of Caribbean woman and the multi-faceted roles they play, rather than simply portraying them as mothers and lovers.

The general findings of the chapter, as far as gender relations are concerned, were first, that women enjoyed considerable degrees of autonomy within their households, so long as they did not share it with their male partner. If they lived with their husband or boyfriend, not only would they have to bear the burden of the housework but they would lose their role in decision-making. However, because of the rich variety of household forms and the strength of household networks, it is possible for women to live in households without their male partners; usually with their own relatives or alone with their children. Secondly, employment in the Caribbean is segregated both horizontally and vertically. Women are therefore concentrated in certain sectors and at the lowest levels in those sectors. Women work to maintain their independence, but their status within the household, if shared with a partner, is little changed. The gender relations of the workplace were patriarchal because of the way employment was structured. However, employment did offer women the means to maintain their independence, and an alternative to the patriarchal gender relations which arise when they are economically dependent on men entirely. Thirdly, the nature of union patterns in the Caribbean was identified as rich and varied. Women could either remain single, have a

visiting relationship, cohabit or marry. Unlike men they could only be involved in one kind of union at a time. Visiting unions were seen as ones which allowed women to maintain their independence and so were the least patriarchal. Cohabiting was seen as the most patriarchal because it allowed men to control women without giving women any legal or financial security. Marriage was also seen as an arena of patriarchal gender relations but it did give women some security. Finally, the section on heterosexual behaviour in the Caribbean demonstrated that sexuality was structured in ways that favoured men at the expense of women. Sexuality was male-dominated and heterosexual and was maintained through a sexual double standard which allowed men complete sexual freedom. Male sexuality and potency defined masculinity; fertility defined femininity. A refusal to accept the patriarchal relations of heterosexuality could result in severe social censure and violence directed against women. Men wanted to father children but not be responsible for them and women had to raise their children alone.

Chapter III demonstrated the nature of the four areas of social organisation and showed that throughout the Caribbean women did experience patriarchal gender relations to a lesser or greater extent within these areas. It gave an indication of the pattern of gender relations that could be expected in Montserrat.

Chapters V to VIII presented the findings of the fieldwork carried out in Montserrat. Each chapter dealt with one of the four areas.

Chapter V showed that the Montserratian household exists in a variety of forms and is dynamic, with fluid membership, in a similar way to that found throughout the Caribbean. The variety of household forms means that it is acceptable for women to live in households which allow them to maintain their independence. Women bear the brunt of household

labour and this is especially pronounced when they live with a male partner. Children contributed more labour than men in the home did. However, women seemed to be in favour of their sons learning how to do housework and teenage children thought that household tasks should be shared. Few women complained about the unequal gender division of labour and so it seems that many women either felt that it was their allotted duty, or that it was too difficult to change men's behaviour. There are more women who live without their male partner than do. They therefore have considerable autonomy in decision-making about their households and their own lives. Even where they live with male relatives they are still active in decision-making. For those women living with their partners, some felt that they took an equal share in decision-making. Others felt that it was right that men were in charge, but others resented the dominance of the men and said that they had to resort to devious means to get what they wanted. Networks between households are important sources of support for women, especially for childcare and at times of conflict between women and men in the home. The chapter concluded that the Montserratian household in general is not a site of patriarchal gender relations. However, where individual households are shared with a male partner, it can become a place where women's lives are controlled by men. As the majority of Montserratian women do not live with their partners, the household is a site of their independence rather than of patriarchal gender relations.

Chapter VI investigated Montserratian employment. This is segregated horizontally but not strongly segregated vertically. Women are represented at fairly high levels and they enjoy good promotion prospects, regardless of marital status. There is some concern about the low wages paid to women in the new areas of employment such as textiles

and manufacturing. Government policy has not yet found a way of dealing with the problem, but its Labour Ordinance, social security system and childcare provision have proved advantageous to women workers. Employers have rather stereotyped ideas about a female workforce, but generally favour the employment of women. The female workforce is far from homogeneous and there are marked differences in the benefits experienced by professional women and manual workers. Despite difficulties faced by women workers, such as arranging childcare and low wages, women are keen to work for the sense of independence it gives them. Employment in Montserrat, therefore, can not be seen as a site of patriarchal gender relations.

Chapter VII considered the nature of the union patterns found on Montserrat and the pattern of gender relations bound up within such unions. The most formal and only legally recognised form of union is marriage which involves less than 30% of adult Montserratian women. The number of people marrying is declining and the number getting divorced is increasing. While marriage offers women legal security, it also means the loss of independence and personal freedom. At the individual level most women said they were in favour of marriage; at the general level they had strong criticisms about the nature of marriage in Montserrat. A married union is the site of patriarchal gender relations. Cohabitation was the most uncommon type of union and is not respected. It means the women lose their independence and freedom without gaining any security. Cohabiting with a man who leaves you after many years to marry another woman seemed to be a common and feared occurrence. Cohabitation is another site of patriarchal gender relations. The visiting union allows women to maintain their independence in their own union while enjoying the companionship and support of a partner. However, men and women are not equal within

visiting unions because men enjoy personal and sexual freedom which they deny to women. Despite this, the visiting union is the least patriarchal and most popular form of union.

Heterosexual behaviour was the subject of Chapter VIII. It considered this broad area in four parts. The first part on sexuality found patriarchal gender relations to be at play. Sexuality was defined in male dominated terms and, while women were aware of their own sexuality and sexual desires, they were not allowed to express them; female sexuality exists but is controlled. Masculinity is based on sexual prowess and reproductive potency; femininity is defined through fertility and motherhood. The sexual double standard gives men complete sexual freedom as well as enabling them to control women's behaviour. Montserratian women are fully aware of the inequality of this situation but feel that there is little they can do about it, although many are committed to teaching their sons to behave in a different way.

Part II considered biological reproduction. Women tended to be rather unsure about their own biology and reproduction. Many use contraception but somewhat reluctantly and often ineffectively; but they have clear ideas about the importance of controlling their own fertility to control their own lives. Men refuse to take responsibility for contraception and some even criticise women for using it, especially if she has not had a child by them. Women face a serious dilemma over their fertility; to control it means going against Montserratian definitions of a 'good woman', not to control it means losing independence, greater responsibilities, and, for many, raising a child single-handedly. Abortion was strongly disliked and remains illegal. Sexual activity began at an early age; mostly as an experimentation for boys and mostly under pressure for girls; rates of teenage pregnancies are high. While there is

no direct patriarchal control of reproduction, for example, through the restriction of the use of family planning, there are patriarchal gender relations surrounding reproduction. It is women who have to bear the responsibility for fertility, and women, who are defined in terms of their reproductive capacities: men reap the rewards as reproduction renews Montserratian definitions masculinity. Biological reproduction for men and women then, is a major source of conflict; whilst central to definitions of both masculinity and femininity, the burden of reproduction is exclusively that of Montserratian women.

The third part considered the care and raising of children. Women are forced to take on the responsibilities of children because men will not. Given the sexual double standard a man can refuse to accept a child as his. He, therefore, has no worries about pregnancy in a sexual relationship, and does not worry about responsibilities of fatherhood once the child is born. In contrast women spoke very highly of children and most women were either happy about being a mother or hoped to have children in the future. There was though the understanding that children could restrict their independence. This was reflected in the views expressed by as yet childless women who wanted to achieve more educationally and career-wise before having children. Patterns of childcare are structured by the patriarchal gender relations which structure sexuality and biological reproduction.

The final part investigated how the patriarchal gender relations of sexuality and biological reproduction were maintained through social censure and violence. Social censure is directed at women and serves to control their behaviour. Women who do not abide by the rules of Montserratian heterosexual behaviour such as fidelity, motherhood, passivity, will be gossiped about and even socially ostracised. Women who

are promiscuous, sexually demanding and childless are labelled as whores and socially excluded. Women fear gossip and so try to keep their actions connected with sexuality as secret as possible; men try to publicise theirs as much as possible. At the individual level a woman who does not conform to her partner's ideas about acceptable behaviour may be subjected to violent attacks, which can be severe. Social censure and violence are the direct result of the patriarchal gender relations that surround heterosexual behaviour and are attempts to force women to conform to these relations. They are therefore the means by which patriarchal gender relations are maintained and reproduced.

9.3 Patriarchal Gender Relations In Montserrat

The thesis has shown that gender relations are patriarchal in Montserrat. The four areas of social organisation do not all exhibit the same patterns of gender relations, neither in form nor in intensity. The household is only the site of patriarchal gender relations where women share it with a male partner. The workplace per se is not a site of patriarchal gender relations but the introduction of low wage piece work means inevitably that some Montserratian women are encountering discrimination in waged work. Inevitably too, it is patriarchal ideology which props up the notion that women can and will work for lower wages than men. Union patterns can be the site of patriarchal gender relations, depending on the type women become involved in. Marriage and cohabitation involve women in strong patriarchal relations; visiting unions are the site of either egalitarian or weak patriarchal gender relations. Given Montserratian definitions of masculinity and femininity, heterosexual behaviour inevitably involves women, in general, in patriarchal gender

relations; for individual women the extent to which their sexuality is subsumed to their male partner must inevitably vary (cf Chapter VIII, 8.I.1). Similarly, biological reproduction, whether in the form of contraception or childcare, is structured in a patriarchal fashion: whilst both Montserratian men and women require children to define themselves as men and women, conception is more a game won by men and lost by women - as laid down by the rules of Montserratian masculinity and femininity. As for childcare, a situation in which children are cared for exclusively by women because men want no part in this can be described as nothing other than patriarchal.

A major conclusion of this thesis therefore, must be that gender relations in Montserrat are patriarchal in nature, but that the sites of patriarchal gender relations are principally heterosexuality and biological reproduction. For Montserratian women who do not live with a male partner and for those in employment, particularly outside the low paid sector, patriarchal gender relations are not encountered in either the workplace or the household. At the individual level all sexual unions have the potential to subordinate women to patriarchal gender relations, particularly if children are born to the union or the union is a residential one. A visiting relationship with a man involves a woman in patriarchal gender relations at the general level because her behaviour within that union is constrained by social censure. She may also be controlled at the individual level by her partner, often through violence. However, she maintains considerable autonomy and independence in her own household. If the visiting union becomes a residential one then women lose the independence and autonomy they used to have in their household. Either way, if children are born to the union, the woman may

still be abandoned by the father. He may refuse to accept the child as his, or he may accept the child but fail to support it. A woman must then struggle to support the child alone or enter another union with a man who offers her financial help, as well as sex. Often this help is given only if she has another child by him and thus the cycle begins all over again. Only by controlling her own fertility, and thereby risking losing her new partner and going against Montserratian definitions of femininity, can the woman avoid this. For Montserratian women, to enter into a sexual union with a man and to have children is to become enmeshed, to a lesser or greater degree, in patriarchal gender relations. Patriarchal gender relations are therefore sited principally in the relations surrounding heterosexuality and biological reproduction. They are maintained and reproduced by an ideology characterised by highly specific definitions of masculinity and femininity, and through social censure and violence which are the means by which the one gender (men) controls the other (women).

It is important not to see Montserratian women as helpless victims, their lives totally controlled by men and burdened with raising children. Montserratian women, as we shall see below, are aware of where the problem lies and they resist their subordination. Many more women have entered the workforce and teenage girls appear determined to establish careers for themselves. They value their employment primarily because it allows them to maintain the independence they try to establish in other areas. While they may experience difficulties with being both employee and mother, they cope with such difficulties because their financial independence is critical to their overall independence. Women strive to maintain the independence they have in their households and are reluctant to allow their male partners to live with them. The decline in the number

of marriages and the increase in the number of women entering visiting unions is an illustration of the way in which women are trying to keep their independence in their own homes. Although heterosexual behaviour and biological reproduction are constructed around patriarchal gender relations women are trying to circumvent this male power in four important ways. They are increasingly controlling their own fertility and having children when they wish to. For many women they learn about contraception after their first child but they do try to plan subsequent pregnancies. Secondly, women develop strong relationships with their children and through them find the affection and companionship they fail to receive from their male partners. Thirdly, some women try to raise their sons to behave in a different way to their fathers and their daughters to be strong and independent. The fourth way is one adopted by few women. These are women who step outside social convention and behave in a way that allows them to express their sexuality, demand what they want sexually, have numerous sexual partners, sometimes simultaneously, and refuse to be subordinated to men's wishes and desires. Such women are socially ostracised and criticised; they are labelled as whores and frequently cursed at. While most Montserratian women would not like to be categorised in this group, many desire the kind of freedom such a group enjoys. In their own way they are trying to achieve such freedom.

9.4 Who Has The Power In Montserrat?

This final section of the chapter allows Montserratian women to express, in their own words, their own thoughts on the nature of gender relations in Montserrat. It presents the responses made by the interviewees when they were asked 'Who do you think has the most power in

Montserrat, men or women?'

The interpretation of power was left up to the women themselves. Only one woman spoke of political power, another spoke of economic power. Some also considered power in relation to opportunities for education and employment. Most interpreted it to mean power in the sense of freedom to behave how they wished. A few women interpreted 'power' to mean responsibility, stability and capability. With such an interpretation, they said that women had more power, which meant that they felt that women had to take on much more responsibility, because the men were unwilling or unable to do so. I would argue that having responsibility is not the same as having power. Women are often in control of a situation, for example childcare, because men cannot be relied upon, and cannot be forced, to do anything. A very small number of women felt that men and women were equal in society.

Let us now consider what the women said. First, the women who felt that women had some power because of the responsibilities they had to shoulder;

Interview 7:

"Women I would say. You know we always have that argument, perhaps I should say I'm not sure. Women are dominant in the workplace and also in the household. Lots of men feel that their role is to go out and make some money and leave women with the children. This means that she has more of the say, not in every household but in the majority. I think the women are forced to take on such responsibilities because the men won't do it."

Interview 44:

"The women because the men don't take any responsibility. The women have to be the driving force behind the men. As a woman you have to say, 'This needs doing lets go and do it.'"

Now the women who felt men had more power than women, either politically, economically or in the areas of heterosexual behaviour;

Interview 40:

"Oh, the men. I mean if you look at the politics of the country, all the people in a position to push people around and get what they want and get more powerful while others get weaker are men."

The financial secretary, the chairmen of the current political parties, the lawyers, they are all men and they have a lot of weight, a lot of authority. The men in their everyday lives with women, they take the lead."

Interview 6:

"Economically if you were to add up the businesses and the amount of money that people own I think the men are economically more dominant, like the Osbournes, the Mercers and Cassells."

Interview 9:

"Well the men...Men have no shame, they do things and people wouldn't call them down, but as soon as women do the things that men do they immediately start to call them down, they figure that women should be more disciplined. People don't call men down like they do women, women have to be more stable and more responsible."

Interview 83:

"You would never find it equal because the men might say they are equal or more powerful. Men can do things women aren't supposed to do, it shouldn't be like that. For instance, a man will have a wife and 2 or 3 women but a woman can't do it, anything like that happens and she will be cursed out, but the men just figure they are right. It's not fair at all."

Interview 92:

"I think the men because like, for instance, a man will have his girlfriend, he might go out and she might go out and he might see her speaking to another man, and he will beat her up. They get more jealous, but women have to put up with them having more than one girlfriend."

Of the women who felt that men had more power there were a mixture of responses when they were asked what they thought about the situation. A very small number of women felt that it was God's plan for men to have more power and they were quite happy to accept a secondary position;

Interview 70:

"Men, because most of them go with the Bible, and the Bible say the men should be the head of the house."

Interview 71:

"Well the Bible say that the man is always the head so I don't worry about that."

Others felt that women could have more of the power if they only tried but that all too often they gave in to the men, they allowed men to get away with it;

Interview 21:

"Well in some cases they are not equal, I think because some of the women allow the men to take advantage of them."

Interview 24:

"I would say the men because the women let them. Some women they go and rest up with some men and there are some men that love to beat women and a man will beat up a woman tonight and they are vexed tomorrow and the next day you see them together again as if nothing ever happened, you know, that sort of thing. That's because you let the man do it to you, so you find that men feel powerful. But if the woman were to stand up to them and walk off and leave them and let them feel...because men are weaker than women and they only pretend to be strong. Women give in too much, they give in too much to the men."

Some women felt that there was little they could do to change the situation;

Interview 5:

"Well job opportunities are equal but men can do a lot of things, to me, women can't do, what's acceptable for men definitely does not go for the women. A man may think he can have 3 women, but no way can a woman have 3 men, that just would not be acceptable, so in that way men are more powerful."

Interview 46:

"I would say the men, because you see, men usually get away with stuff that women can't, well you could but it would...when someone would ignore what the men do, not the women. For example the men going out every night, maybe with a different girl, he would get away with it, but if a woman started doing it now she would get called. Most times I think it's not fair but there is nothing I can really do about it so I don't get a big headache over it, but I think a lot of times it's unfair because they get away with a lot some times."

However the largest group of women agreed that men had a lot of power in certain areas but that things were changing and the women were the agents of change; that women could be as strong as men and take power into their own hands. They felt that men and women could work together to the benefit of them both and that this would be the best way to proceed in the future. In an attempt to achieve this aim some women had brought up their daughters to be assertive and independent and their sons to be more considerate, to help in the home and to behave in a different way from their fathers.

Interview 18:

"Men, okay, here the men have the most say. It's only now the women and them try to break out to a certain extent, trying to take on more responsibilities on themselves, but before time everything used to be on the shoulders of the men. I believe women's liberation is finally reaching here, they are finally catching on, because they realise they must make their minds up themselves, you can't just let the man be doing everything and you just sitting and saying 'yes sir, no sir'."

Interview 23:

"Men are. I guess it was brought down from the Bible days men were more powerful and it's with us today. I don't support the idea. Women now are changing. In slavery days men used to dominate, the slave masters used the slave women to make babies, but women now want to be equal to men and so in a way there's a revolution happened."

Interview 55:

"Men have so much more freedom. Even if they think it's wrong they know no-one will really criticise them and so they go ahead and do what they want. I think with women having jobs now it's changing, they don't need the men the way they used to, they can stand on their own two feet, so perhaps the men will have to change their behaviour too. You see I think women are different. They push more to settle down earlier than men, they want security sooner. For men it's easy to play around for as long as they want. I think women want to settle down sooner because they have to look after their children more than the men. Although now I find that a few men are changing on that behalf. You find men are taking on the responsibility for their children more. Young men now go out with the children, you see them taking them out, years ago you never saw that, all the responsibility was placed on the women for the children. Now you sometimes find equal responsibility."

Interview 100:

"Men, definitely men. Certain things men can do a woman can't do, men have more than one girlfriend but women can't. Men don't help in the house or with the children as much as they should. For jobs is equal. Men should take more responsibility. I try to teach my son to be responsible, I tell him if he get a child he must look after it. I hope he will be different from his father."

We have seen therefore that those women who felt that men had more power were careful to qualify where they felt men had the power. Men were seen to have power through the pattern of gender relations which revolve around certain union types, heterosexual behaviour and biological reproduction. Women were considered to have some power in the household and to have gained economic independence from men through having jobs.

There was an acceptance that their position as women has improved from that of their mothers. This is largely because of birth control and the increased opportunities for women to earn their own income;

Interview 25:

"Well, the men like to think that they are more powerful. You hear them saying because you are a woman you can't do this and you can't do that. I heard a friend say that if he ever goes on a plane and sees a woman pilot he would walk right back out. Things like that, they feel because you are a woman you can't do it. To me there are women who are much stronger than men. To me it's equal, at least it should be. The men think they are it but they are not really, you know! I think things are better for me than for Mummy. When she was my age she always had to ask permission to go out whereas I tell her I'm going out. At my age too there were things that she just couldn't afford to have, things weren't so good, money, education. I think women today are more educated, more free. Like Mummy didn't have contraception, she just had one year between the first four children."

Vivette:

"Things are better for women now. Like my mother when she was at this age she already have about 5 kids. I have more freedom, because now you don't have to have babies if you don't want to. You find in those days they just keep having kids."

In most cases, therefore, Montserratian women feel that they live in a society where men have the power in the gender relations of heterosexuality and biological reproduction. However, a notable number of these women also feel that there are ways to challenge such patriarchal gender relations. This is why these women have got jobs, why they desire to control their fertility and why many of them will only marry if they find a partner who will respect their autonomy and desire for equality. If they cannot find such a partner they will continue their visiting relationships, indulge in their children and in some cases try to raise children who will no longer accept the patriarchal nature of heterosexual behaviour.

What was striking about these responses to the last question in the interview, was that the women themselves stated in a few sentences, what

this thesis concluded after almost four years of intellectual analysis. It is a clear example showing why it was important to allow Montserratian women themselves the chance to discuss their own lives, in their own words. It is they who have the answers.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER II

- 1) There have been criticisms of British feminism because it has been too culturally specific, considering only the lives of white women. Recently there has been a growth in studies that criticise the ethnocentrism of British feminism and concentrate specifically on the life experiences of black women in Britain (Bryan,B., Dodzie, B. and Scafe,S: 1985, Smith:1982).
- 2) "Without a theory of gender relations, any attempt to 'marry' the concepts of sex and class will do for theories of sex what marriage usually does for women: dissolve them into the stronger side of the partnership." (Alexander and Taylor, 1982:81)
- 3) There have also been studies which focus on women and specific areas such as: politics (Rogers:1985), medicine (Roberts:1981b), the law (Atkins and Hogget:1984), redundancy (Coyle: 1984), trade unions (Drake:1984), religion (Russel:1985).
- 4) The debate over the definition of patriarchy has been lively and lengthy. Rubin (1975) restricts the term for use in defining Old Testament type nomadic groups and groups like them where the father held power. Young and Harris (1982:471) discuss various mechanisms men use to subordinate women. These mechanisms are the use of unmediated physical violence, male dominated ideology and control over women's access to the economic sphere. Mitchell (1974) uses the term to describe kinship systems in which men exchange women and the symbolic power fathers have in such systems. The most usual interpretation of the term is to describe the material and ideological control of women's sexuality and labour, both at home and at work (Barrett:1980, McDonough and Harrison: 1978, Rowbotham:1973). For a full discussion of the various definitions of patriarchy see Beechey (1979).
- 5) The conclusions drawn by radical feminists about the individual nature of women's subordination could prove disturbing for some because it stresses that women's oppression is also a very personal affair. It is not the result of some faceless structure that the individual alone can do nothing about. Siting women's subordination at the level of the individual means that all men have to accept some responsibility and all women could attempt to challenge their own subordination, if they wish to.
- 6) Annie Whitehead in her notes to the Subordination of Women Workshop held in 1978 states;

"Our position was, then, that the collection of data, the piling up of example after example of women's worsening position could no longer advance the study of the effects of development on women of the Third World, and our task was rather to develop a more theoretical approach - an approach which would theorise gender and gender relations." (1979:11)
- 7) It was not until 1980 that a United Nations report presented the following quotation;

"Women constitute **half** the world's population, perform nearly **two-thirds** of its work hours, receive **one-tenth** of the world's income, and own less than **one-hundredth** of the world's property."

8) The patriarchal definition of sexuality, which is heterosexuality, also has negative effects on the status of homosexuality within sexual definitions and can also subordinate homosexuals in a similar way to women. This point was also made by Rubin;

"The suppression of the homosexual component of human sexuality, and by corollary, the oppression of homosexuals, is therefore a product of the same system whose rules and relations oppress women." (1975:180)

CHAPTER III

1) The references that this thesis found most useful in developing an understanding of the nature of the historical, political and economic background to the Caribbean region are as follows:

Ambursley, F. and Cohen, R. (eds) (1983) Crisis In The Caribbean (London, Heineman Educational Books)

Beckford, G.L. (1972) Persistent Poverty: Underdevelopment of Plantation Economies of the Third World (New York, OUP)

Millet, R. and Will, W.M. (1979) The Restless Caribbean (New York, Praeger Publications)

Payne, A.J. (1984) The International Crisis in the Caribbean (London, Croom Helm)

Sutton, P.(ed) (1986) Dual Legacies in the Contemporary Caribbean (London, Frank Cass)

Thomas, C.Y. (1988) The Poor and the Powerless (London, Latin American Bureau)

Thomas-Hope, E. (ed) (1984) Perspectives in Caribbean Regional Identity (Liverpool, CLAS, University of Liverpool, Monograph Series 11)

2) It will become apparent below that there is more information relating to certain components than others. This is not an indication of some components being more important than others but rather an indication of the amount of information available in the relevant literature. It is inevitable that some of the problems outlined in 3.3 will have influenced the research of certain components.

3) The movement of multinational corporations out of a particular region 'when the going gets tough' formed the basis of a short play written and directed by Honor Ford Smith (founder member of Sistren). It was presented at the workshop on 'Women and World Development' as part of the 1980 Seminar on 'Women and Social Production in the Caribbean'.

The same seminar pointed out a major contradiction concerning women's employment;

"Two opposing tendencies appear to be evident at different times, in different Caribbean countries as far as women's employment is concerned:

1) An expansion in female employment, often when foreign capital is seeking to lower labour costs and is prepared to relocate parts or the whole of the production process abroad.

2) A decrease in the employment of women when male unemployment becomes a political liability. The government may then deliberately try to attract industries which employ men, so as to lower unemployment figures because they do not include women's unemployment figures in their calculations.

So while, on the one hand, legislation against discrimination may be on the statute books, actual government policies such as employment policies may well enforce discrimination." (1980:22)

4) The 'Women and Social Production' seminar (1980) found that in the Caribbean, multinational companies';

"labour policy has generally fostered the employment of young, usually unmarried, women. The reasons for this are;

1) Advantage could be taken of the way gender relations are structured which allowed the lowest returns to be paid to women's work.

2) Unmarried women could be paid less since it was assumed that they had only themselves to support (a false assumption when the high rates of illegitimacy are considered).

3) They could be thrown out of the labour force when it became necessary, with little social disruption. The assumption being that in any case they would be under the protection of some man." (1980:95)

As we have seen, the reality for Caribbean women is very different from the picture described above

5) The unrepresentative nature of Caribbean family law is considered in great detail by;

Cumper, G. and Daley, S. (1979) Family Law in the Commonwealth Caribbean (Mona, Jamaica, UWI)

CHAPTER IV

1) Montserrat was re-named from the Arawak name of Allioughana. The Arawaks were the indigenous people of the Caribbean, along with the more war-like Caribs. The Arawaks were peaceful people who had developed certain skills which included pottery and painting. Their artifacts are now to be found in museums, a particularly fine collection is housed in the National Museum of Antigua, St. Johns, Antigua. At the time of European colonisation the Arawaks were being killed off by the Caribs, who were then killed off by the Europeans.

2) There is some debate about who gave Montserrat its name. History books state that it was Columbus but I was recently told by a Catalan historian, Albert Villaro i Boix (personal communication) that a priest

from the Catalan region of Spain named the island. I think this is more likely because Santa Maria de Montserrat is a Catalan monastery, and Columbus, an Italian, may not have known of its existence.

3) Montserrat does not have a tourist industry based on large hotels and charter-flight holidays, like Antigua, Barbados and Jamaica. Rather it encourages visitors to come and stay in the small personal hotels, or to rent the vacant condominiums and ex-patriot houses which are not used all the year round by their owners. This is partly because of the small size of Montserrat, so the tourist office prefers to foster the image of a slow, peaceful, friendly island. The other reason is because Montserrat does not have the pure white beaches that are part of the holiday image of the Caribbean. Instead, Montserrat has grey or black beaches of the finest sand because of its volcanic rocks. There is one white beach, Rendezvous, which can only be reached by boat or by a climb over steep, rocky hills. However, once there, visitors are usually guaranteed a perfect Caribbean beach, all to themselves.

4) This is an approach to research which has been encouraged by feminist writers. Feminist research argues that the researcher must expect to share as much with the researched as they expect to gain from them. It is a rejection of the more exploitative relationship whereby the researcher gains what they want through only taking from, and not giving to the people they study (Roberts:1981a, Stanley and Wise:1983).

CHAPTER V

1) Some of the women have also lived in other households between leaving home and living in their current household. However there was not the time to go into this. Some of the women did give such information and most of them had to move because of problems with landlords putting up the rents, or because the owners of the houses where they were staying returned to Montserrat. Interviewee 24 moved house a lot. She was quite unusual because she had lived alone at a time when few single women established their own households;

"I left home because of my father...after I started working I went to Dagenham and rented a house on my own. Then I lived in two more houses before I came here to this one. The first house the owner came home and wanted her house back and so I moved to another house, also in Dagenham. It belonged to my uncle who lived in the States. He didn't want anyone to rent it so I lived there. I was living on my own, at that time it was unusual for a young woman to be living on her own in Montserrat, but now there are more women doing it. It was rough at first, because I wasn't getting much money, I had to get a loan and buy furniture. I had very little furniture! Then I got married and we lived in my uncles house for four or five years and then we moved into our own house."

2) The following interviewee explained how she and her brothers and sisters helped their mother by accepting the difficulties that arose from her financial difficulties as she struggled to raise them alone.

Interview 64:

"Well, you see it was a little tough but then we were the kind of kids, especially I, we were the kind of kids, we were very

contented, if we had this, we satisfy, if we don't, we went without, that was the kind of kids we were. So it wasn't a problem to that. If we were kids that want everything we see other children have it would be a problem because she didn't have anyone to help her, but we were very contented kids. Sometimes we go home from school and she would say, 'there's no lunch,' we say 'okay, it's alright.' We went back to school, it's not a problem and we play, we give jokes about the lunch. If they say we have bread and cheese, we say we had bread and cheese too."

3) For some households there remain the tasks of collecting wood or buying charcoal and of getting water from the communal stand-pipe, although such households are decreasing slowly in Montserrat as water is piped into more homes and gas is delivered to even the smallest villages. However it is clear that in this type of households the burden of domestic labour is even heavier.

4) Table 5.7 shows the breakdown of the domestic labour tasks by who does them for the majority of the time. There are 9 categories of tasks and each of these is further subdivided into 5 sections which indicate who does which task most often.

Instances of sharing are shown where the women said that a particular task was carried out by both men and women in the household on a regular basis. While some tasks may be carried out with the help of children or a domestic the totals show the figures for anyone said to be exclusively responsible for the task. For example under washing/ironing 79 women have exclusive responsibility, it is shared in 13 cases, one child and seven domestics have sole responsibility.

CHAPTER VI

1) In a recent letter from a Montserratian friend (August 1989) I was informed that the 100 or so off-shore banks on Montserrat were being investigated by the FBI because of suspected money laundering.

2) In the Caricom census the term 'adult' refers to persons who are aged 15 or over and who not in full-time education. All adults were asked a series of questions about their economic activity both during the 12 months before the census and during the week immediately preceding the enumeration. The census also presented comparative figures with the 1970 census findings wherever possible.

3) The horizontal categories used in this table are not equivalent to those used in Britain. This is an example of the difficulties of using data collected from overseas for comparisons with UK data.

4) The following table shows the equivalent levels of participation in professional and technical occupational groups of selected islands for which the Caricom Censuses were available. The countries are placed in alphabetical order. The Caricom Census was carried out in more countries but copies were not available either in Montserrat or in Britain. The four islands shown share a similar colonial history to Montserrat, except in recent times as they are all independent. In terms of economic bases they are broadly similar.

Number of employees in professional and technical occupations in selected Caribbean islands

Country	Total employed in professional & technical occpn	No. of men	No. of women
Barbados	10,266	5,449	4,817
Dominica	1,904	807	1,097
Grenada	22,632	1,227	1,405
Montserrat	463	212	251
St. Vincent & Grenadines	2,644	1,208	1,436

Source: Caricom Censuses, 1980-81 for each country.

It is clear that, with the exception of Barbados, women are predominant in these sectors.

5) It should be pointed out that, as the last line of table 6.3 shows, the actual numbers that are being considered are not very high. There is inevitably some problem about evaluating unemployment and so the figures used are only estimates.

One of the reasons unemployment figures can only be estimates is because there is no system of unemployment benefit in Montserrat, and therefore, no formal registration. Very poor families receive a means-tested welfare benefit from the Social Security Office. Welfare payments are not made to able-bodied men and only to able-bodied women if they have dependent children. The amounts paid are minimal and allow bare subsistence, and 'being on the welfare' carries a considerable stigma. Those who have no job and cannot get welfare assistance have no option but to rely on their families.

6) There is a lot of casual work available. For men it is mostly day-to-day hire as a labourer on the construction of a house where they are given cash payments at the end of the day. Such work is very labour intensive and insecure, men rely on having personal contact with construction contractors. Other work available to men is car-washing where a trusted unemployed youth will be asked to wash cars, receive cash payments and possibly a 'contract' to clean the same car each week. Other work includes panel-beating and general mechanical work, where a garage owner may employ a youth he has previously trained but not been able to give a full-time job. Such men would all declare themselves unemployed at the time of the census. For women informal employment would include domestic work in the ex-patriot housing area; they would not declare their cash earnings made on a daily basis. Women who work as babysitters are frequently part of the informal sector. The women who work as higglers at the weekly market will rarely declare their earnings and may even declare themselves as unemployed at the time of the census. In all cases the work is insecure, usually organised on a daily basis and paid for in cash.

7) While I was on the island a new manager of Bank 2 was appointed, he was a Canadian. I asked the assistant manager if she had applied for the post and how she felt about the appointment. She told me that she had not applied as she was quite happy with her current position. She said that in fact she had a lot of power in the bank because she had been there so long and knew everyone. She said that she did not really want to take on responsibility, and that if something went wrong she would not have to

take the blame. They had had to appoint a Canadian as she was only person qualified enough to take the post.

8) During the time of interviewing at Johnson's a newspaper article appeared which said that some of the women assemblers at the factory were earning up to \$140 per day, \$600 per week. While these women may be able to earn this much there was no mention of the fact that most of the women only take home \$100 a week. The owner commented about there not being enough workers available on Montserrat and that he may open another factory in Jamaica. This belies the fact that there were almost 300 women who declared themselves to be seeking work in 1980, and by 1986 the figure has probably risen. Jamaica has a very high unemployment rate among women, as was said in Chapter III, and probably has less protective legislation for employees in order to attract foreign concerns.

9) While the sexual harassment of women workers is not a publicly acknowledged problem and may not even occur, the suspected sexual harassment of school girls by their male teachers was voiced in the most public place possible, the Calypso competition of the 1986 Carnival. The winning singer, Hero, entered two songs, one which sang of the delights of a very sensual form of Caribbean dancing, 'whining' and the other about the serious nature of sexual harassment of the islands school girls. Hero is himself a teacher and in an interview said that he knew there was such a problem and that, despite warnings not to perform the song, he felt it was a problem that needed urgent attention. He also stated that he hoped his song would encourage girls to stand up to the harassment and also to report the offender. Below are the lyrics from this winning calypso.

How dare you stand in front of the class
And insist that I call you sir
When you molest me, you harass me,
You make a pass
Wanting to be my lover
Your job is to teach and teach me well
So I can achieve my goals and excel
I'm just a child, my time for love will come
No way! Not now, when I become
A fully matured women

Chorus

I'm under age, I'm not ready for love
I'm under age, is me lesson I'm thinking of
Ah don't want de money you offering me
Me parents taking good care of me
I'll ignore your advances
You nar go spoil me career chances
I'm under age, I'm not ready for love
I'm under age, is me lessons I'm think of
I will hold up my dignity
Hang on to my morality
You can give me a low grade
Dis child not afraid
I'm under age, I'm not ready for love
I'm under age, is me lessons I'm thinking of
You're my teacher, you cannot be my lover
You nar go gee me no bastard pickney

Guys like you love to take advantage
Of girls of tender age
I will not let you use your
Position of authority
As a weapon to seduce me
I don't want to be in school and pregnant
That's the last thing mom and dad would want
They grind the axe to buy uniform and books
But all I get from you sir is sweet talks
about my looks

Chorus

I'll stand firm sir, complain you if needs be
If you persist in tormenting me
You're a no-good, good-for-nothing imposter
Hiding behind de name of teacher
I suggest that you see a psychiatrist
Get help for your child love sickness
I could imagine the many young girls you hurt
You should be in jail, bread and water
For breakfast, lunch and dinner

CHAPTER VII

1) Marriage is the only legally recognised union in Montserrat. Montserrat is still a crown colony and so its law tends to reflect the social organisation of the colonial power rather than that of Montserrat. The laws are not changed as frequently as they are in Britain and so a divorce is much harder to obtain in Montserrat than it is in Britain.

The only laws which may help women in cohabiting or visiting unions are the 'bastardy laws' which allow a woman to sue a putative father for the financial support of any children they may have together. Unfortunately the amounts ordered to be paid are very low and do not benefit the mothers at all. More detail about the Montserratian system of matrimonial law can be found in Appendix III.

2) It is not clear why such a definition was followed. It could have been an attempt to record only 'stable unions', ie. those lasting longer than a year, but just because a baby has been born to the union in the previous year does not guarantee that the union is still intact. In fact, as we shall see later, for many women in the younger age groups, the advent of a pregnancy in a visiting union is often the cause of its break up.

3) Evidence of the falling numbers of marriages on the island can be found in church registers of marriage. The Anglican Church in the study village serves the whole of the Eastern area which includes 12 villages. I was able to look at their marriage and baptism registers. I noted the number of marriages and baptisms from 1970 to 1987.

In 17 years there were only 31 marriages. 26 of these took place between 1970 and 1979, only 11 took place from 1980 to 1987. There has clearly been a fall in the number of people getting married in this church although the levels of membership have either remained the same or risen slightly over the same period.

In the same 17 years there were 231 baptisms. However only 41 of the children baptised were born to married parents, hence 199 of the children were illegitimate. Parents, in particular mothers, wish to

follow a religious ceremony for the baptism of their children even if they have not had their union sanctioned either by the church or legally.

- 4) The following are further examples of what the women said about why the number of marriages on the island was declining, specifically because they see other marriages getting into difficulties;

Interview 15:

"Because you know it's the image, now many marriages end up in divorces, people have lived together for a while and they appear as though everything has been alright, but as soon as they get married, they don't, not only ordinary circles, even in religious circles marriages are not holding out."

Interview 50:

"I don't know. I've heard some people say that they don't want to get married because of how they see married life, how they see some husbands treat their wives, and they say, "mmm, not for me, if I'm treated like that I wouldn't get married."

Interview 85:

"You see most married couples on Montserrat they don't stay together, you see the first year, then the next two years and then they part. I don't think the husbands settle with one woman, if something annoys the wife she will argue and then he will go away and find someone else. They think because they are married to you you shouldn't have nothing to say about what they do."

- 5) Below are comments from interviews about the problems that men cause in marriages;

Interview 49:

"Well, the men aren't serious, they prefer to have a child here and come and bring the money and probably stay the night and leave, some of them are not responsible. Some too it's a problem with other women, you find that's a problem."

Interview 94:

"It depends on the men, because most men here feel that women should not be independent. They feel that getting married means that they own the woman and then maybe they see the woman going up the road and they say, "Where are you going, how come you never tell me you are going up this road?" and so, that's why most women doesn't get caught up with men."

- 6) Here are some more excerpts from the interviews where women discuss the fact that, as women gain more independence, so the rate of marriage declines;

Interview 52:

"Now most of the girls want to go with their career and get an education, which I don't blame them for...Most girls want to be someone before they settle down to get married, because after getting married and having your kids it sort of affects that."

Interview 59:

"The women don't want to be tied down, to have responsibility. With a boyfriend you are more free, they don't control you as much."

- 7) People being afraid of making a commitment was one of the reasons given as to why fewer people were now getting married;

Interview 20:

"I suppose they don't want what you would call a total commitment, either the man or the woman feel that if there is any argument they can leave one another, without any strings attached."

Interview 38:

"I really don't know, honestly, except that perhaps they are scared of married life, perhaps what they have seen from other people in married life, things don't work out so they are afraid to go into it. I also think that some of the things you consider people get married for, here they don't have to get married to get them, so why get married? Then people look at the whole institution of marriage, they see that it doesn't work."

- 8) The following interviewee, number 32, had very strong opinions about the problems a wife faces in trying to make sure that her husband remains loyal to her. She spoke with passion and has obviously had difficulties in maintaining a marriage where her husband remains as loyal to her as she is to him. Her response was quite lengthy and so it has been edited a little;

"I think the respect that should be given to married couples is not there. I don't think people respect people's commitment. Alright you may be single and you may find it hard but I think to pick up someone's husband or to encourage somebody's husband, I think is very wrong. Now depending on the marriage and on the man, it's very easy for that man to go across, because housewives and working wives, or if there are children involved, the time that is there we have to do the washing, the cleaning and so. We don't have that much time, whereas the woman on the outside is free. She has nothing to do, after her work, her time is there, she is totally fresh. We inside might say, "I'm tired or I just can't be bothered." A woman on the outside would not say that because it is easy for her to do. Many men blame the wife but we deserve to be tired because most men do not help, they come in, they read their paper and then they go. While you are doing the dishes they will be getting changed, the wife doesn't have that free time. I think most men they can't make the commitment. Most men tend to run away, I think they don't like problems, I think they can't cope. I think they feel that they work all week and that they should have fun at the weekends. But we women work all week, we can't hang out at the weekends because of the children. You say to him, "what about me, I've been home all the time working too!" but then that causes trouble because you are not supposed to say anything, you're not supposed to ask him why he's staying out until the next day, you can't ask that. So it's conflict again."

CHAPTER VIII

- 1) I think that the women were less willing to discuss matters of sexuality because of the way sexuality was constructed. Women, as we shall see below, are not expected to discuss their own sexuality. Female sexuality is rarely acknowledged and so these women have been socialised into thinking that it is not an area they should discuss.

2) The interview with Samuel had to be closed and conducted on a separate day to allow me time to explain to him that I was not interested in having a sexual relationship with him and then to persuade him to finish the interview

3) In the early stages of my stay on the island I was constantly asked by men if I had a boyfriend and if I wanted one. When I responded that I was not interested in having a boyfriend they would always ask me if I was a lesbian and would prefer a girlfriend. If a woman was not interested in having a male sexual partner then she must desire women, because everyone sexually desired someone.

4) It is important to keep in mind that boasting about sexual ability was an important part of masculinity. Samuel was keen to convince me that he was 'God's gift to women' and so I suspect that there is some degree of boasting in his interview with me. However that is not to deny that he was an attractive man and had no trouble in finding women who wanted to go to bed with him.

5) One afternoon I sat on the church wall opposite the clinic in the study village. I was joined by a young man in his twenties. After the initial chat up where I was asked if I had a boyfriend and if I wanted one he began to talk about the problems with young women in Montserrat;

"You see that clinic there? It's a bad thing for me. In there the girls them can get pills to drink and then they don't make no babies for the men them, like they supposed to. I'm 22 now and I can't make a baby, all the girls them drink the pills and I can't make them get a baby for me. It's bad men, it really bad. It make life hard on a man like me. You does drink those pills, girl?"

He was lamenting the fact that young women now control their fertility and he was afraid that he would not be seen as a real man because he had not yet fathered a child. He also found it difficult to get girlfriends because he did not have a job and was known to smoke a lot of ganja, but the problem of women getting contraception provided him with a better excuse for his lack of children.

6) Interviewee 47 is involved in a relationship that is of great interest to other Montserratians because it is unusual. I was told about this same relationship on two separate occasions. Celeste told me about it first;

"I know a gentleman and he has four girlfriends! And each one have to make a baby for him and they don't quarrel. But the girls he get involve with they are high bracket, they have good jobs so he don't have to support them, they support him! I always laugh when I see him. They know about the others but they learn to live with it. They know and they don't quarrel, they don't fight."

Interviewee 24 also told me about this relationship in her discussion about why she thought men had more than one girlfriend at a time and why the women accept it;

"I have a friend who is in that same position and she keeps hoping that one day he'll marry her. But this been going on for a long time now and he have 3 other chicks with her. He treats them all the same, today you see this one driving his car, next

day you see the other one. You can't look at one and say that is his special chick, he treats them all the same, all 4 of them. If you are in a situation like that you should get out, I don't see why they stay."

What was unusual about this case was not that the man had four women at the same time, or that all four had had a child for him. What was unusual is that the women all knew about each other and they were friends and seemed happy to share the man. They take each others children to the nursery and organise baby-sitting for each other. However they are all hoping that the man will marry them, it would appear that they are in for a long wait.

7) The oddity of the above case is that the women do not behave in the way they are expected to, they do not get angry with the other women involved. Interviewee 77 cohabits with her boyfriend and they have two children together. Some time before the interview with me he had been spending more time out at night and she had just found out that he was seeing another girl in the village. After four weeks she had decided to take the children and stay with his mother and sisters who also lived in the same village. Her own mother had thrown her out when she became pregnant but her boyfriend's mother was very good to her. Her case illustrates the way that public censure can turn on the woman whose partner is being unfaithful, especially if she knows about the other women and does not act in an aggressive way towards her;

"So the Friday morning I packed my bag and went by his mother and I stayed there, his mother appreciate me very well. Then in the afternoon he telephoned her because he found that I wasn't at home, she tell him I was not there. So he say, okay, and then he went up to where that girl is living, then he brought the girl by his mother's house, in the downstairs, and I was upstairs. In the night I hear talking but I didn't know it was him. Early in the next morning his mother was going to market at 5am, she went down and she saw that he was there. So she came up and told me that my boyfriend was downstairs. So I went down and I was going in the door and I saw him pushing me back out. I was wondering what was going on because he was pushing me out, so I pushed my way in and when I went in I saw the girl! I was feeling kinda bad and I meant to hit the girl, but I didn't. When I went back upstairs his sisters were mad with me because they say I should have made noise and they would have come down and beat the girl up. So everybody was making noise at me and the girl went around and told people that even when I saw her with my boyfriend I didn't do nothing. Now I feel bad when I go out and people call to me, we have a word, 'knuckle' or 'horney', for when your man have another woman, and people call out and say, 'Girl you are getting horny on that girl,' I just feel so bad sometimes.

8) The high numbers of women using hormone contraceptives is rather worrying because there is a tendency towards high blood pressure and thrombosis in any case in the Caribbean, without adding to the risk with contraceptives of this type. The injection used is Depro Provera, which after clinical trials in Puerto Rico was banned in the USA, at about the same time that it became available in the Caribbean.

9) While waiting for one of the mini-buses back to the village I was able to overhear a conversation between some youths in the rum shop

behind me. One youth asked another how things were going between him and Elsa. The response went something like this;

"Well you know she was hard at first, just want to do hugging up and that kind of boring stuff. She not really so keen on the real sexing but me persuade her its the best and me show she me could sex her good and now we are doing the real business, not the boring stuff."

Clearly for him, sexual intercourse was 'real' sex and he found other form of physical affection boring.

10) I asked one of the other principals of a secondary school about the problem of school-girl pregnancies and found her to be more honest about the situation;

"We have quite a few. Well two to me is too many. It had fallen off in the last two or so years, but it seems to be rising again now. I can tell you how many I have lost in the present year, I've lost 4 and there's a question of a fifth. They leave school and will stay at home until the baby comes. That's the end of their schooling. They leave before anyone has a chance to ask them to, they know that they have to leave"

I asked her what she thought about such a policy of the girls having to leave and not being able to return;

"Well Montserrat is a very small society and standards deteriorate quickly because of the closeness of the people. So to be able to maintain standards, since the girls are known, and what influences one can influence others. I think it's not fair that the girls are exposed to the jokes and embarrassment they would have at school. If they could be catered for in another institution I think that would be a good idea, but not in the regular institutions."

I asked why she thought the rates were increasing again;

"Well 3 years back we only had 1, then 2 for the past 2 years, now we possibly have 5. You see it could have been that in the past years they had abortions. One year I had 6 and I reported it but the machinery here, they won't do anything about it. The parents are not co-operative and the girls would have to go to court and several kinds of things which the parents don't want to go through and it doesn't change the fact that she's pregnant. I think it's older men who get them pregnant, there are many unscrupulous men."

11) Children are well cared for and protected not only by their parents but by most other people in their village. On Sundays in the Anglican church it was impossible for me to decide which children belonged to which mother or grandmother. During the service, the children would move and sit with different people. No-one seemed to mind that they had just been joined by a child that was not theirs but rather be delighted and would care for them for the rest of the service. Children would often walk alone to the nursery and primary school but they would be quite safe because there was always some adult out on the street keeping an eye on them. An adult would also intervene if they saw children arguing or felt there was some kind of trouble. This was true of both men and women and

it was not an unusual sight to see a man of 20 playing with children who were not related to him. Just as almost all adults were protective towards children that were not their own or their relations, children were always polite and well-behaved with all adults.

12) The following table shows how many bastardy cases have been brought to court from 1984 to 1987;

Number of bastardy cases for the years 1984-87

Year	Cases of arrears	New cases	Other
1984	25	15	4
1985	35	23	1
1986	30	15	1
1987 (until June)	28	6	-

Note: 'other' is where the father wants to leave the island but has failed to make adequate provision for the children.

As the table shows relatively few cases are brought to court and even when a father has been ordered to pay the \$12 weekly, many do not. The Registrar told me that magistrates rarely send fathers in arrears to jail; they just make them pay. He also said that about 40% of bastardy cases are brought by teenage mothers.

The situation is far from satisfactory, the amount to be paid is ridiculously low and there is little effort made on behalf of the legal profession to make the men pay.

Taking a father to court can evoke a very negative response in the man and may be another reason why women do not take fathers who will not support their children to court. I overheard this man complaining about being taken to court as he spoke out loud to everyone in the restaurant;

"If they carry me to courts that's it, I pay \$12 a week and no more. It's the end of the relationship. \$12 that's all if they carry me to the courts. \$12, that's what the law says, that's what I pay - nothing more, no shoes, no clothes, no parties, no trip to the beach, no trip to the waterfall - nothing, nothing at all, just \$12. That's what they get if they carry me to courts. Them woman them nasty. I've got the money ready set aside, me no love it though, me no love it at all!"

His fury at the thought of the mothers of his children taking him to court to make him pay something means that he will refuse to give his children anything extra. He is willing to see his children go without because he feels humiliated. I suspect that the problem is that he does nothing at all for his children and the women have decided that \$12 is better than nothing. As we have seen it is not easy to decide to take the father to court.

13) The police records are kept in the police station in the study village. This station is responsible for 9 villages. Reports made are recorded by hand in log books with brief details about the incidents. The sergeant who allowed me to see the records said that one month was very much the same as another. Below are some sample reports of incidents between men and women during the three selected months;

March

Two cases of assault where a man attacked a woman. In both cases the injuries were not very serious and the women wanted the men warned and made the report as a form of defence.

A woman made a report that her cohabiting boyfriend had verbally abused her in their home.

Two cases where a man used threatening language against a woman, in each case the men had threatened to chop the women up with a cutlass. Police warned the men.

A woman reported that a man who lived in her house was causing her annoyance by constantly calling her name, the police warned him. A woman reported that a male neighbour was annoying her by calling her name each time she passed his house. The police warned the man.

May

Two cases of men using threatening language against women. Police warned the men in each case.

Two cases of men causing annoyance to women by constantly calling their name. The police warned the two men concerned.

Two cases of women reporting that men had assaulted them. The men were warned in each case.

A woman reported that her son had beaten her up in their home. She wanted the man warned.

July

A woman reported a man for constantly coming into her yard and she said that she couldn't stop him. The police were asked to warn the man.

A woman reported that a man had beaten her 16 year old daughter. Court action is to be taken.

A woman reported three young men in her village for using insulting language against her. They had called her a whore and had said that she had "maggots dropping from her cunt". The police were asked to warn them.

A woman reported that a man had used threatening language against her. The police warned the man.

A woman reported a man for constantly annoying her and troubling her. The police were asked to warn him.

It is clear from these incidents for just three months that women can suffer various forms of abuse from men, whether it be the constant annoyance of them always calling her name to a violent assault. The police are called in to help when the women asking the men to stop has had no effect. It is unclear what effect the police warnings have, but none of the cases were repeated ones.

14) This made it very difficult for me to get to know any men or to ask them for an interview and maintain any kind of respectability in the study village. As explained in Chapter IV the two interviews I did carry

out with men in the village resulted in so much gossip and speculation, not to mention problems with Linton, that I was forced to abandon the idea of interviewing men altogether.

15) One evening one of my neighbours came round to my house with two of her daughters. Her husband had hit her in the eye when she had disciplined one of the younger children. It had developed into an argument during which she was hit again and her husband had gone to fetch his cutlass, threatening to cut her to little pieces. She had left the home to go to the police station for help. While there she was joined by her two eldest daughters who were very upset because their step-father had hit them and ordered them out of the house and told them to go and find their own fathers. The women then brought her daughters round to me and asked if they could all stay with me until the situation had calmed and the police had been. Later she telephoned her brother-in-law who was also a church minister and asked him if he could come to her house to try and help her sort things out with her husband. The woman later left to go back to her house but the girls stayed the night with me and went home in the morning once the situation was calm.

On other occasions women would come to me after an argument with their partners to make telephone calls or just simply to talk about what had happened. As I was a stranger to the village and a foreigner they felt that their partners would not follow them into my house.

16) In the newspaper that was issued weekly a young woman, who had recently returned to Montserrat from the States where she had been educated, wrote articles that debated the status of women in Montserrat. In one of them entitled 'Beating is Degrading' she wrote about the level of violence that women endure from men. She stated; "The beating of women is considered, in some circles, to be the right of a man, and many women have come to believe that it is something that they must accept." She went on to talk of times when well-known political figures have been seen to beat their women, so even they do not set an example. She commented on the fact that some men see it as a ritual and even argue that women enjoy it. She urged women not to accept such behaviour and not to be afraid of reporting the men to the police because often all that is needed to stop them is a warning.

The following week a man wrote a response to her article, 'Stop Embarrassing The Men' in which he said that the journalist had got it wrong, that men are not cruel and heartless and that women are far from perfect. He argued that many women trick and fool men. He said that the media always seemed to side with the women and that;

"What men need is a media boost to get their true values and viewpoints into the spotlight."

He implores her to give the poor men a break.

These two articles show what a difficult task women face if they are to attempt to change attitudes which accept violence against women. Men either feel that it is their right or they refuse to acknowledge that there is a real problem.

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

Women In Employment Interviews

One hundred women employed in various types of work were interviewed. The distribution of these women within each type of employment has been shown in Chapter IV. The methods of sampling and interviewing techniques were also discussed in that chapter. This appendix will present the interview schedule that was used in all 100 interviews. In effect, the interviews were semi-structured. The format of the interview remained the same for each interview, although flexibility was possible where certain responses needed further investigation. A flexible approach to the interviews was particularly necessary in the areas where women were asked about their children, their relationships and their ideas about these relationships. All the women were asked the same general questions about each area but specific questions were then tailored according to the responses of each individual. Each interview was taped, lasted between 20 minutes and half an hour, and was conducted in the place of employment. The following schedule shows the general questions that were used for each interview.

Interview Schedule For Women In Employment Interviews

General Background

- 1) What is your address?
- 2) Where were you born?
- 3) What is your religion?
- 4) How old are you?
- 5) How old were you when you left school? What kind of qualifications do you have?
- 6) Are you married/single/divorced/separated/widowed? Do you have a boyfriend?

Household of Origin

- 1) Is the house you live in now the same house that you grew up in?
- 2) How many people lived in the house when you were growing up?
- 3) What was the relationship between you and other people in the house?
- 4) What was the type of union between your mother and father? Did you know your father?
- 5) Was your father present most of the time or not? (If not, where was he?)
- 6) Who did the housework in your house?
- 7) Did this ever cause problems?
- 8) If you have left home, why did you leave?

Current Household

- 1) How many people live in your house?
- 2) What is their relation to you?
- 3) I would like to tell me something about the type of house you live in. Can you tell me which of these your house has: electricity/ water (inside or outside)/ gas stove or coal pot/ shower (inside or outside)/ toilet (inside or outside)/ fridge/ television/ car/ is the house built of wood or concrete/ do you have a yard/ do you have any livestock?
- 4) Is the house rented/ owned/ mortgaged?

- 5) In your household who usually does the following household tasks (when I say mean usually I mean on a day to day basis): cooking/ cleaning/ washing and ironing clothes/ washing dishes/ shopping/ yard duties/ looking after livestock/ paying bills/ looking after children?
- 6) Can you tell me what you would do on a typical weekday, how you organise your time? For example, what time do you get up, what do you have to do before you leave for work, how do you get to work, what do you do when you get home from work?

Employment

- 1) What is your current job?
- 2) How long have you worked here?
- 3) What job did you do before this one?
- 4) Why did you change?
- 5) What is your weekly wage?
- 6) Is this enough to meet your needs?
- 7) If not, how do you get the rest of the money that you need?
- 8) Do you think it is important that you have a job?
- 9) Why do you say this?
- 10) What job would you do if you could choose?
- 11) Do you think having a job changes your position in the household?
- 12) If you live with your partner, does having a job affect your relationship in any way?

Children

- 1) Do you have any children? If not, would you like to?
- 2) If yes, how old are your children and are they boys or girls?
- 3) How old were you when you had your first child?
- 4) How did you feel about it?
- 5) How old would you have liked to have been before you had your first child?
- 6) Did you get pregnant by accident or did you plan it?
- 7) How many children did/do you want to have?
- 8) Did having children change your life?
- 9) If yes in what way?
- 10) Do you think you would be doing anything differently if you did not have your children?
- 11) What do you think are the good things about having children?
- 12) What do you think are the bad things about having children?
- 13) Do the father/s or your child/children support them?
- 14) How do you feel about this?
- 15) Would you take a father to court to try and make him pay something for the child/children?

Contraception and Abortion

- 1) Do you use contraception? If not currently have you used it in the past?
- 2) If you have never used it, why not?
- 3) If you have used it or do use it, which type?
- 4) Which types do you know about?
- 5) Where do you get your contraceptives from?
- 6) What problems have you had with contraception?
- 7) Do you think that it is important to use contraception?
- 8) Why do you say this?

- 9) What do you think about abortion?
- 10) Why do you say this?

Sexual Relationships

- 1) If you are married, why did you get married?
- 2) If you are not married, would you like to get married?
- 3) Why do you say this?
- 4) Why do think fewer people are getting married in Montserrat?
- 5) Have you, or would you ever live with your boyfriend?
- 6) Would you like to?
- 7) Why do you say this?
- 8) What do you think about the idea of cohabiting?
- 9) Do you and your boyfriend visit each other?
- 10) How many times do you visit?
- 11) What do you think about visiting relationships?
- 12) Is your boyfriend the father of your children?
- 13) Do men in Montserrat have more than one girlfriend at a time?
- 14) Why do you think they do this?
- 15) How do you feel about it?
- 16) Who do you think is the most powerful in your relationship, you, your boyfriend/husband or is it equal?
- 17) How do you feel about this?
- 18) In Montserratian society, who do you think has the most power, men, women or is it equal?
- 19) How do you feel about this?
- 20) Do you think it is changing?

Study Village Interviews

Ten in-depth interviews were carried out in Elseka, the study village. The households were chosen because they were representative of the household structure of the village as a whole. Eight women and two men were interviewed (the reasons for so few interviews with men have been discussed in Chapter IV). These interviews were lengthy, often taking two hours and, in some cases, had to be conducted in two parts. Questions of a general nature were asked and then specific questions were asked in order to investigate a particular response further. Because I knew all the interviewees fairly well before interviewing them, their responses were often very detailed and long. All the interviews were taped and were either conducted in the interviewees home or in mine.

Interview Schedule For Elseka Interviews

General Background

- 1) How many people live in your house and what is their relation to you?
- 2) How many people were there in the house you grew up in, and what was their relation to you?
- 3) Are you married/single/divorced/separated/widowed? Do you have a boyfriend or girlfriend?
- 4) Do you have a job? If not, where do you get your money from?
- 5) How old are you?
- 6) In your house, who does the housework? Do you ever help? Do you think boys and girls should do housework? Why do you say this?

Marriage

- 1) Why did you get married? /would you like to get married?
- 2) Why do you say this?
- 3) Why do you think not many people get married in Montserrat?
- 4) Do you think its a good or a bad thing to get married?
- 5) Why do you say this?
- 6) Do you think women want to get married more than men?
- 7) Why do you say this?
- 8) When do you think is the best time to get married?
- 9) If a marriage is not working, what do you think people should do?
- 10) Why do you think some marriages have problems?

Types Of Unions

- 1) What do you think about men and women living together?
- 2) What do you say this?
- 3) What do you think about men and women visiting each other?
- 4) Why do you say this?
- 5) What is the most usual type of relationship between men and women?
- 6) Do some men have more than one girlfriend?
- 7) How do you feel about this?
- 8) (For the men) Have you, or do you have, more than one girlfriend at a time? Why?
- 9) (For the women) Has your boyfriend/husband ever had another girlfriend as well as you? How did you feel about this?
- 10) Why do you think the men do it?
- 11) How do you think the women feel?
- 12) Why do you think women accept it?
- 13) Would you start a relationship with someone if you knew they had a boy or girlfriend already?

Finance

- 1) Who makes the decisions about money in your household?
- 2) How do you feel about this?
- 3) Does money cause any problems in your relationship?
- 4) Do you think money causes problems in other relationships?
- 5) Do you think women are more attracted to men if they have some money?
- 6) How do you feel about this?

Contraception

- 1) In Montserrat, who do you think usually takes care of contraception?
- 2) What do you think about contraception?
- 3) How do you think women feel about using contraception?
- 4) How do you think men feel about using contraception?
- 5) Which methods do you know about? How do they work?
- 6) Do you use contraception in your relationship?
- 7) Which type do you use?
- 8) Do you think attitudes to contraception have changed in Montserrat?

Abortion

- 1) What do you think about abortion?
- 2) Why do you say this?
- 3) Has a girlfriend of yours ever had an abortion? Why did she do it?

- How did you feel?
- 4) Do you know of any women who have had an abortion?
 - 5) How did they do it?
 - 6) Why did they have the abortion?
 - 7) If a woman has an abortion is it kept quiet? Why?

Pregnancy

- 1) In a relationship who do you think wants to have children more?
- 2) Do you think men try to get women pregnant on purpose?
- 3) Do you think women get pregnant by accident, or do they plan it?
- 4) Why do you think this is?
- 5) Has a girlfriend of your ever got pregnant? How did you feel?
- 6) Did you accept that the child was yours?
- 7) When a girl gets pregnant how do people usually react? What happens if the girl is still at school?
- 8) When a woman or a girl gets pregnant how does the boyfriend usually react?
- 9) What do you think about men who do not have any children?
- 10) What do you think about women who do not have any children?
- 11) What do you think are the good things about having children?
- 12) What do you think are the bad things about having children?
- 13) Do you want to have children? or why did you have your children?
- 14) Why do you say this?
- 15) How did you feel when you got pregnant?

Child Raising

- 1) Who usually takes care of the children?
- 2) Why do think this is so?
- 3) What do you think about this situation?
- 4) Do you think men have a responsible attitude to their children?
- 5) Why do you think this is?
- 6) If you do not believe you are the father of a child, what can you do?
- 7) What do you think about men who will not accept a child when they know that the child is theirs?
- 8) Do you think men and women feel differently about children?
- 9) Why do you say that?
- 10) Do men want to have children with different women?
- 11) Do women want to have children with different men?
- 12) What do you think about this situation?
- 13) Do you think there are any changes in people's attitudes about having children?
- 14) If a woman has too many children to look after what can she do?
- 15) Do you think having children changes a woman's/ a man's life?
- 16) What will you teach your children about men/women, about housework and being a mother/father?

Domestic Violence

- 1) Do you think there is a lot or a little violence in homes in Montserrat or Elseka
- 2) Do you think many Montserratian men hit their women?
- 3) Why do they do it?
- 4) If a man hits a woman, what does she usually do?
- 5) Have you ever hit a woman?
- 6) Why did you do it?
- 7) How did you feel about it afterwards?

- 8) What do you think about men who hit women?
- 9) How do people outside the home react, do they interfere?
- 10) Have you ever been hit?
- 11) Why did it happen and what did you do?
- 12) How did you feel?
- 13) Why do you think the violence continues?
- 14) Do you think something should be done about it?

Sex and Sexuality

- 1) How do boys and girls learn about sex?
- 2) How did you learn about it?
- 3) Who do you think is the most forceful about sex, men, women or both?
- 4) Who do you think enjoys it the most?
- 5) Do men know what to do to make sex good for a woman?
- 6) If you want to make the sex better what do you do?
- 7) Do you enjoy sex?
- 8) Can you discuss sex with your partner openly or not?
- 9) What do you think about women who have sex with a lot of men?
- 10) What do you think about men who have sex with a lot of women?
- 11) Do you think men try and trick women into having sex with them? What do you think about this?
- 12) Do you think women have sex with men to try and get something from them? What do you think about this?
- 13) Who usually makes the decision about whether, when and how to have sex? How do you feel about this?

General Attitudes

- 1) What qualities do you look for in a man?
- 2) What qualities do you look for in a woman?
- 3) What do you think about Montserratian men?
- 4) What do you think about Montserratian women?
- 5) In your relationship who do you think has the most power?
- 6) How do you feel about this?
- 7) In Montserratian society who do you think has the most power, men, women or is it equal?
- 8) How do you feel about this?
- 9) Do you think there are any changes in the relationships between men and women?
- 10) What do you think about this?

Children's Questionnaires

These questionnaires were carried out in order to gain some idea about any changes in attitudes between the generations. The questionnaires were administered to 50 school-children aged 13 to 16 years. Twenty seven of the children attended the Seventh day Adventist school and 23 were children living in Elseka (the difficulties experienced with these questionnaires have been discussed in Chapter IV). Each child completed the questionnaires alone. Those at the Seventh Day Adventist school completed them in their classrooms, children in the village either completed them in my home or, in a few cases, in their own. The children were mostly asked to ring an answer, usually 'no/yes/don't know'. In some cases they were asked to write a response, such as 'what jobs do the people who live in your house have', and they

were given a few lines for their answers. Where children answered yes, no or don't know to a question, they were then asked to write a sentence explaining their answer. The schedule for the questionnaires was as follows;

Questionnaire Schedule for Children

General Background

- 1) How old are you?
- 2) Sex: boy/girl
- 3) How many people live in your house?
- 4) Place a tick next to the people who live in your house:

Mother	Sister
Father	Brother
Step-mother	Cousin
Step-father	nephew
Grandmother	niece
Grandfather	friend
Aunt	
Uncle	

Employment

- 1) What jobs do the people who live in your house do?
- 2) Do you want to have a job? yes/ no/ don't know
- 3) What job would you like to do when you leave school?
- 3) What job do you think you will do?
- 4) Do you think that women should have paid jobs? yes/ no/ don't know
- 5) Why do you say this?

Housework

- 1) Who usually does the housework in your house?
- 2) Do you do any housework? yes/no
- 3) If yes, what type of housework do you do?
- 4) Do you think that men and boys should do housework? yes/ no/ don't know
- 5) Why do you say this?

Employers Interviews

The employers that were interviewed using the following interview schedule were those in: The Stamp Office; Bank 1; Bank 2; Sun Tops LTD; Montserrat Textiles; Datapress; Johnson's. I interviewed the owners, managers or head supervisors. The interviews were taped and later transcribed. Each interview was carried out as the first stage in arranging interviews with a sample of the women employed by these firms. School principals, the chief nursing officer, and heads of civil service departments were given a broadly similar interview. The interview schedule was as follows;

Interview Schedule For Employers

- 1) When did this firm/company begin?
- 2) How many people do you employ?

- 3) How many of these are women?
- 4) What are the various employment positions/grades?
- 5) How many of these positions are held by women?
- 6) How do you recruit your employees?
- 7) What proportion of your employees are married?
- 8) What proportion of your employees have children?
- 9) What is your policy about maternity leave?
- 10) Are there any differences in promotional prospects for married and single women?
- 11) When considering applicants does the number of children they have influence your decision?
- 12) What is the average weekly wage of your staff?
- 13) Do you have a high or a low turn over of staff?
- 14) Why do think this is?
- 15) Why do you think most of your employees are women?

The following background interviews were carried out in Montserrat between October 1986 and August 1987. There are listed in chronological order.

- 1) Director of Agriculture Department
- 2) Director of Education and Health Department
- 3) Minister of Education and Health
- 4) Co-operatives officer
- 5) Labour Commissioner
- 6) Interview with village nurse in Elseka
- 7) Family planning nurse and acting executive director
- 8) Manager of Radio Antilles
- 9) Early-childhood Education Officer
- 10) Permanent Secretary to Administration
- 11) Director of Education
- 12) Co-operative organiser, Elseka village
- 13) Lawyer and solicitor
- 14) Registrar General
- 15) Director of Social Security
- 16) Nutrition Officer
- 17) Manager of T.V. Antilles
- 18) Adviser to Montserratian Education Department from Wolverhampton Polytechnic - concerning changes in secondary education provision

APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY

This appendix contains an explanation about the language used in the quotes from the interviews and presents a glossary of the Montserratian phrases and words that appear in the quotations.

The quotations are presented verbatim, they are the exact words used by the people interviewed. It is a marked feature of Caribbean dialects that the syntax and grammar is quite different from that of standard English. In Montserratian dialect the past and present tenses are either confused or the present tense is the only one used. Another feature of Montserratian is that pronouns are confused throughout sentences and what may begin as 'you' becomes 'I' or 'me' in a following sentence and then may revert to 'you' or even become 'she'. The word 'he' is often used for men, women and children.

The following phrases and words are used in the quotations:

Ah	I, myself
anti-man	homosexual man
bawl	cry, sob
big woman, big man	adult woman, adult man
blows	punches, slaps
bruk	hit, punch
bull-man	homosexual man
cool	relaxed, untroubled, calm, respectable
curse	shout at someone, complain about someone, criticise someone
cut the yard	cut the grass in the yard, usually with a cutlass
cutlass	large knife, machete
de	the
dem	them
dis	this
eh?	a sound made at the end of a statement to indicate disbelief or questioning
eyes too long	lustful, lecherous
face the idea to	to suggest something to someone
flapper	homosexual woman
friending	to have a sexual relationship with someone
full up	to get angry, furious
fussing up	to be angry/annoyed with someone

ghaut	steep, narrow valleys
go across	have an extra-marital affair
good for nutting	a worthless man, a man with no job and a bad reputation
heavy with sleep	to have just woken up
inside children	children born to a marital or residential union
inside work	housework
kinda	kind of, sort of
living	to live with a sexual partner
look for	to look after someone
make noise	complain
make a baby	to have a baby
making a baby	to be pregnant
nar	not
open up	to have sex with someone
outside children	children not born in marriage or to a co-residential union
outside girl	a extra-residential girlfriend
outside work	yard duties, livestock and farming
pickney	children (from an African word)
pickaninny	children
pret up	to put on airs and graces
rail up	to tear up into small pieces
save face	to avoid embarrassment or humiliation
sexed	a man has had sex with a woman
sexing	a man is having a sexual relationship with a woman
shackin up	cohabitation with a sexual partner

shameless	to have no shame, not obeying social convention
stranger	a non-Montserratian, a foreigner
sweet talk	flattery, language used by a man to encourage a woman to begin a relationship/ have sex with him
swell up	get angry, become furious
take the child	accept the child as ones own
tch	a sound made in annoyance or exasperation, known as 'streupsing'
teachment	education
throw away a child	to have an abortion
vex	angry, annoyed, furious
visiting	to have a non-residential sexual relationship
wayward	unconventional, failing to abide by social rules
wutless	worthless, usually used for people who do not behave in a conventional way, especially sexually

APPENDIX III

APPENDIX III

The following information which discusses the legal status of union types in Montserrat was gathered through interviews with a lawyer and the Registrar. I was also able to listen to a series of tapes compiled by Radio Antilles, 'The Law and You'.

Montserrat is still a Crown Colony of Britain and as such its laws are based on British ones. However Montserrat lags behind Britain because it is bound by English Common Law and not by English Statutes which are what affect the divorce and separation laws. The Matrimonial Causes Act which forms the basis for Montserratian Matrimonial Law dates from 1948. This section will consider the laws relating to marriage, divorce, separation and cohabitation.

The legal age of consent on the island is 21 and anyone wishing to marry before that age must gain the consent of a parent or guardian. Marriages can be performed by an officer of the church or by the registrar. The usual rules prohibiting certain categories of people to marry and what constitutes a legal marriage apply in Montserrat. Marriage is the only legally recognised form of union.

Divorce is much more difficult to attain on Montserrat than it now is in Britain. No-one can sue for divorce before they have been married for 3 years. After three years duration a divorce can be sought on three grounds, adultery, desertion or cruelty. A divorce can not be granted on the grounds of incompatibility. The onus of proof is on the petitioner who must prove to the court that the defendant has committed either one of the above, however as 75% of cases are uncontested there is rarely a trial of any kind. When asked about the most common grounds given for a divorce, the Registrar stated;

"Desertion is the most common ground but it is usually combined with adultery and or cruelty. More men file for divorce than women and mostly they have desertion for their grounds. Women tend to have adultery and cruelty as their grounds."

A lawyer stated that many of the divorce cases brought by women are on the grounds of cruelty which is usually in the form of violence which may have been sustained for a considerable period of time and be quite severe.

When a divorce case is heard by the high court, which only sits 3 times a year, orders are usually made about alimony and maintenance for any children born to the marriage, and the division of any property. Maintenance to both the ex-wife and any children is usually based upon a man's earnings and the reason for the granting of the divorce. In the case of the division of property, a wife who has been employed during her marriage or can prove that she has contributed financially will be given half the property. The court may decide that a non-employed wife who has maintained her family and home shall have a third share of the property.

There are not many divorces on Montserrat although the number is increasing. The table below show the number of divorces cases heard in high court from 1984 to 1987. In 1987 only one session of high court had been held and there were to be two more sessions in July and November. The Registrar expected the number of cases to be heard to be about 15 or more.

Year	Number of Divorce Cases
1984	11
1985	11
1986	13
1987 (until June)	9

The Registrar and lawyer were both asked if they felt that anything in particular dissuaded people from applying for a divorce when it became obvious that their marriage had broken down. The lawyer's response was;

"From the legal point of view I think perhaps the fact that the proceedings are not heard in private, I have found that to be something to make people change their minds. I think it's a significant factor in persuading people not to contest because the proceedings are held in open court."

The Registrar felt that it was the costs which deterred people as a divorce case could cost up to \$1,000. As we have seen, for many of the employed women this would constitute over ten weekly wages and would therefore be very prohibitive to any but women employed in the professions. Unless one of the partners wishes to remarry the cheaper, and less traumatic, option of a judicial separation is usually sought.

Under the laws about separation a Decree of Judicial Separation can be granted which entitles the partners to legally live apart without constituting desertion. At the same time as granting the decree the judge can also make an order about maintenance and custody of any children. It costs less than a divorce. The problem with a separation is that it is then difficult to gain a divorce at a later stage. The grounds of desertion and adultery have been lost, unless adultery can be proved to have happened before the separation. The only ground left open to a petitioner is that of cruelty, where the defendant can be proved to have inflicted cruelty on the petitioner while the couple were separated.

A woman cohabiting with a man has very few rights as a common-law wife. Only where she can prove to have made a direct financial contribution to the household can a woman who leaves, or is forced to leave, her cohabiting partner make any claim to property through the courts. Her maintenance of the man and any children they may have through housekeeping is not taken into consideration. Only her economic contribution will be considered. A woman who leaves a cohabitee cannot get any maintenance for herself although she could sue for financial maintenance for any children from the union. Very few cases concerning cohabiting couples are ever brought to court.

It is clear that the legal system is strongly influenced by the colonial power that established the legal system in the first place. Montserratian Matrimonial Law while being based on British Law does not follow legal changes apace and so is more conservative. Divorce is made quite difficult to get because of legal restrictions, costs and the public nature of the cases. Despite these difficulties more people are filing for divorces each year, but marriage remains a difficult union to leave. A separation is easier to gain but then makes divorce more difficult to achieve. The legal rights of women in a cohabiting union are very few and it could be an explanation as to why this is not a popular form of union for many women. Montserratian Matrimonial Law is a clear example where the legal system does not reflect the social reality of the people it represents (Cumper & Daley:1979).

Some of the divorce cases reveal quite awful examples of abuse of

the petitioning women by their husbands. The Registrar allowed me to look at the file of the following divorce case which was due to be brought before the high court sitting in July 1987. He told me that the treatment meted out to the woman was quite typical. It was also fairly typical that the woman had endured such treatment for some considerable time before beginning to take legal action.

The couple are both professional people, with university education. They were married in 1965 after living together for a number of years. They have four children, one born when the couple were cohabiting and three while they were married. The husband has frequently committed adultery and treated his wife with cruelty.

Particulars;

1) On the very night of the wedding the defendant came home and changed his clothes and said he was going out to the cinema. The wife protested and said if he was going out then she was going out too, he said he would not go.

2) Two days later he left home on Friday at 4pm and came home on Saturday at 9am. He was later seen walking with a named woman and came home again on Saturday at 9pm.

3) In 1966, the wife was 6 months pregnant. She complained about his relationship with the same woman and he beat her until she was unconscious.

4) In 1966 he began another adulterous relationship.

5) They had an argument over this relationship in 1967 and he stabbed his wife with a pair of scissors in the shoulder.

6) In 1968 he went on a course to Jamaica and had an affair with a woman there.

7) On his return to Montserrat he began another adulterous relationship.

8) During this time the defendant beat the applicant on the slightest provocation and failed to maintain her and their children because he was spending his earnings on other women.

9) During the 1970's he had another relationship with a woman and twins were born to the union.

10) From 1973 onwards he had yet another relationship and lived with the woman and they had a child together.

11) In 1972 he beat the wife up and threw her clothes outside in the presence of his wife's sister on a visit from Barbados.

12) In 1973 he took the wife to Foxes Bay and beat her with electric wire and left her there.

13) In 1982 he punched the wife in the eye causing severe swelling and the eye to be contused.

14) In 1980 the wife asked the Reverend of the Methodist church to intervene and stop him from interfering with the family, he said, "No one on earth can stop me from seeing her!"

15) Since 1983 he has been living with his latest partner and returns home in the early hours of the morning when he wishes to harass, threaten or intimidate the petitioner.

Particulars of violence and harassment of the family in the home;

1) 3/9/86 The respondent beat his daughter of the marriage, aged 16, cruelly and mercilessly inflicting several cuts, abrasions and contusions on her, causing her severe pain and suffering.

2) 19/3/87 The respondent again attacked and beat his daughter.

3) The respondent walks around the house naked, especially in front of the 16 year old daughter.

4) He turns off the water when the family are taking a bath and

repeatedly fouls the bathroom with his own excrement.

5) Forces his way into the bathroom and squeezes dirty water from his underwear over the daughter's toothbrush.

6) Beats the wife and other members of the family and threatens to kill them if they remain in the house.

The petitioner wishes that;

1) The marriage be dissolved.

2) She receive custody of the 3 children under 21.

3) Alimony be paid to her as a lump sum and the maintenance of the children and secured provision for the benefit of the children.

4) That the respondent be condemned in the costs of the proceedings.

5) That she and the family be allowed to reside undisturbed in the matrimonial home and that the defendant be restrained from entering or interfering with the family in any way.

It is clear that the husband in question is an extremely violent man and has constantly caused distress and suffering to his wife and children. The Registrar felt that the divorce would be granted and the other wishes of the petitioner would also be granted.

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